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# THE AI PRISON PLANET

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*by Selwyn Duke*

The Economic Impact of the Iran War
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# From the Editor

## Don't Sacrifice Liberty in the Name of Progress

Since the dawn of the Industrial Revolution, technological progress has faced determined opposition. The Luddites, skilled textile workers in early 19th-century England, famously smashed mechanized looms. These were not mindless reactionaries picketing against all progress; they protested the destruction of skilled jobs and high wages.

Some objections proved prescient. Early factory conditions brought real exploitation, child labor, and urban misery. Romantic critics such as William Blake decried "dark Satanic Mills." Yet other Industrial Revolution-spawned fears were baseless or overstated. Skeptics warned that railroads would cause livestock miscarriages, or that electricity was a dangerous novelty. In hindsight, these technologies vastly improved living standards, though they certainly disrupted old ways of life, and not always for the better.

However, objections to artificial intelligence are demonstrably unique. Past innovations primarily replaced or augmented human physical strength and dexterity. AI targets the mind: cognition, decision-making, creativity, and judgment — aligning with the Fourth Industrial Revolution's vision of fundamentally reshaping humanity. World Economic Forum advisor Yuval Noah Harari brazenly stated in a 2022 interview, "We just don't need the vast majority of the population" thanks to modern technologies such as AI rendering human labor economically "redundant."

Then there is the physical infrastructure powering AI. Data centers are distinct from the machines of old that merely replaced man's brawn. As detailed in this issue's cover story by Tom DeWeese, these facilities consume staggering resources: hundreds of thousands to millions of gallons of water daily for cooling, vast tracts of prime farmland, and surging electricity demand that is already causing skyrocketing electricity costs. Data centers number in the thousands today, with many more planned in what some are calling a digital enslavement grid.

Utah's Box Elder County recently approved the Stratos Project, a massive hyperscale data center spanning 40,000 acres (62.5 square miles) and consuming up to nine gigawatts of power at full buildout, enough to supply every home in Utah plus several neighboring states. It's being fast-tracked by Republican Governor Spencer Cox's Military Installation Development Authority, a state entity created to support military-related economic development. This designation has allowed it to move quickly with state-level support and tax incentives, bypassing standard local zoning hurdles. Watch for others to follow suit.

Both conservatives and leftists are opposed. Progressive socialists Senator Bernie Sanders (I-Vt.) and Representative Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (D-N.Y.) have introduced the Artificial Intelligence Data Center Moratorium Act, seeking a federal pause on new builds. But as DeWeese explains, the last thing we need is another layer of unconstitutional federal overreach dictating local land use and infrastructure.

U.S. Representative Thomas Massie (R-Ky.) has championed local control against unchecked data-center expansion. In a recent interview with Tucker Carlson, Massie highlighted efforts to shield these projects (efforts that he opposed), including clauses buried in Trump-backed legislation that would exempt data centers from zoning regulations and environmental lawsuits. Massie has also introduced the Surveillance Accountability Act, which requires federal and local agencies to obtain a warrant based on probable cause before conducting surveillance on Americans. The bill targets the warrantless use of facial recognition, automated license-plate readers, commercially purchased location data, and other AI-powered tools that enable governments to build intimate profiles and conduct preemptive policing.

But more must be done, and it's up to us. In this issue, DeWeese's reporting equips readers with facts. Study it closely. Arm yourselves with knowledge of water and energy demands, land impacts, surveillance risks, and the deeper agenda of control masked as convenience. Defend your communities, property rights, food security, and freedoms at the local level. The pursuit of unchecked "progress" must not come at the expense of liberty or self-reliance. ■

Rebecca Terrell
*Senior Editor*

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AP Photo/Emilio Morenatti

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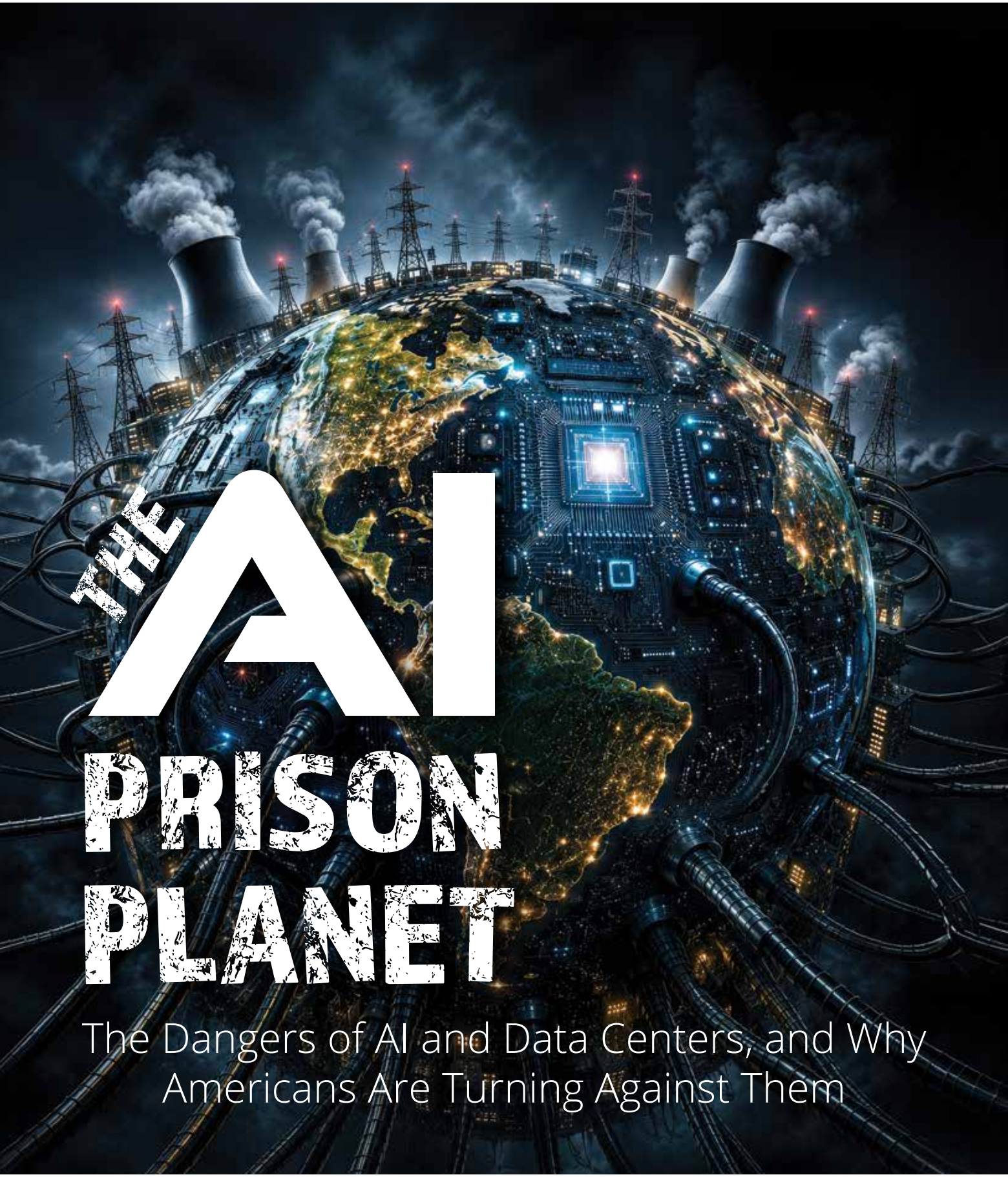
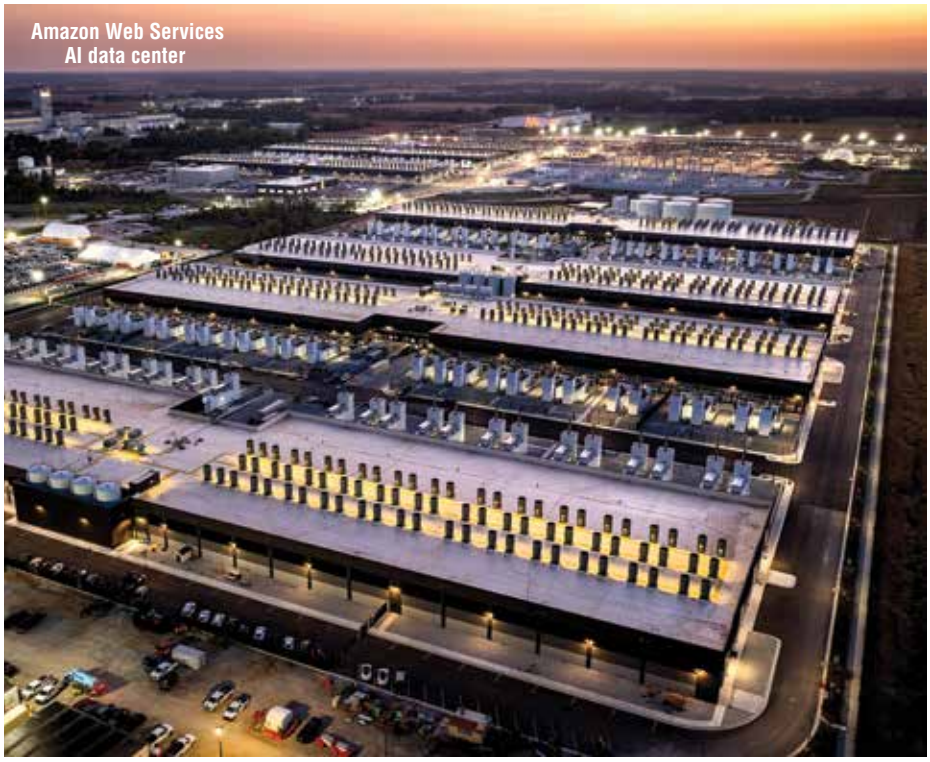


# THE AI PRISON PLANET

## The Dangers of AI and Data Centers, and Why Americans Are Turning Against Them

## AT A GLANCE

- **Artificial intelligence enables surveillance-state control.**
- **Data centers consume massive resources and threaten food security.**
- **AI and data centers are linked to globalist agendas that threaten private property rights.**
- **Communities nationwide are pushing back to control unchecked AI development.**



Amazon Web Services AI data center

Noah Berger/Amazon Web Services via AP Images

***by Tom DeWeese***

Allow hum from server buildings carries across the Columbia River in The Dalles, Oregon, where residents are battling plans to transfer public lands in Mount Hood National Forest for more private data-center development. Across the United States and beyond, communities are beginning to push back against the rapid expansion of these facilities that have become essential to the growth of artificial intelligence (AI).

In Northern Virginia, home to one of the world's largest concentrations of data centers, residents have packed public meetings and posted "No Data Center" signs in their yards, voicing frustration with what one report describes as a constant industrial presence encroaching on residential life. In some neighborhoods, the concerns are frantic; NBC News reports that locals describe a persistent mechanical noise "like a helicopter hovering … all day and night."

Far from an isolated phenomenon, resistance is spreading as quickly as data centers are popping up. A 2026 industry analysis found that community opposition has already helped block or delay tens of billions of dollars in projects, with protests and local organizing reshaping development plans nationwide. In some cases, the backlash has been strong enough to halt projects entirely or force developers to withdraw.

The pattern extends well beyond the United States. In the Netherlands, residents of Zeewolde rallied against a proposed hyperscale facility, with thousands signing petitions, turning the project into a political crisis. According to *Wired*, locals argued the development was "too big for a small town," reflecting a broad apprehension about the scale and purpose of such projects. Similar tensions have surfaced across Europe, where farmers and local groups have protested the conversion of agricultural land into sprawling server complexes.

What unites these disparate scenes, from town halls to roadside demonstrations, is not a single grievance, but a growing sense that something significant is happening, often with little public visibility until construction is already underway. As a national report published at DataCenterWatch.org put it, what was once "quiet infrastructure

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is now a … flashpoint," drawing organized resistance from communities that are only beginning to grapple with its implications.

What exactly is driving this backlash requires a closer look.

## Artificial Intelligence: Friend or Foe?

First, let's briefly consider what artificial intelligence is. AI is a system designed to perform tasks that typically require human intelligence. Promoters say it will make our lives easier and more efficient, doing everything from managing daily calendars to driving cars. Convenience is the main selling point.

There's no question that AI can provide amazing benefits in our lives, particularly in such fields as healthcare, transportation, and the military. However, there are many reasons to be concerned about this technological explosion that is prompting a societal upheaval. AI can be a foundational tool for building a government system that will control every facet of our lives. Therefore, each aspect of it must be examined, considered, questioned, and controlled. After all, this isn't a harmless tech upgrade.

High-voltage transmission lines providing electricity to data centers

AP Photo/Ted Shaffrey

AI systems are inherently shaped by their creators. Even leftists in academia recognize that developers and data scientists inject noticeable biases into their algorithms and training datasets. Essentially, when AI systems are trained on data reflecting specific, non-neutral worldviews, they tend to reproduce and amplify these ideological stances, often presenting them as objective fact. This foundational bias dictates the direction of AI-generated content, influencing everything from research reports to information synthesis, which in turn sways public opinion and impacts political policy.

It's simple to see how this helps usher in the globalist plot about which I've spent decades sounding the alarm. It is a scheme repeated in United Nations (and UN-inspired) programs such as Agenda 21, Agenda 2030, the Green New Deal, and the Great Reset. President George H.W. Bush ensnared our country in the first of them, signing Agenda 21 at the UN Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro in 1992. In the subsequent book *Agenda 21: The Earth Summit Strategy to Save Our Planet*, its radical promoters wrote that "effective execution of Agenda 21 will require a profound reorientation of all human society, unlike anything the world has ever experienced."

A major step toward this "profound reorientation" occurred in 2015, when the United Nations adopted *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*, a framework featuring 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) intended to guide global, national, and local policy through 2030. This process is a continuation of "Local Agenda 21" (LA21), a mandate from the 1992 Rio Earth Summit encouraging local governments to develop action plans. The goals are already integrated into municipal, county, and regional planning throughout the United States and the world. You'll find them in your own area under the deliberately opaque names of comprehensive plans or smart growth strategies that focus on resource- and land-use regulations. The lead advisor to then-U.S. President Bill Clinton's Council on Sustainable Development, J. Gary Lawrence, in the September 1998 issue of the *Millennium Papers*, explained the intentional use of those titles to obscure their relation to LA21. "Participating in a UN advocated planning process would very likely bring out many of the conspiracy-fixated groups and individuals in our society," he admitted. "So, we call our processes something else, such as comprehensive planning, growth management or smart growth."

Of course, AI data centers are not officially part of the original 1992 LA21 framework, but they are increasingly critical to modern, localized, sustainable-development planning. In truth, AI provides the globalists who planned LA21 with the main ingredient necessary to achieve control: total surveillance. Below are some examples of how they are achieving that objective through AI.

## Digital ID

Digital ID is an identification document stored on a device. It replaces physical documentation such as a driver's license, and can store much more information, such as biometric data (e.g., voice and facia-recognition) and be-

havioral analytics (e.g., personal habits and patterns). Proponents such as Bill Gates argue that AI-enhanced digital ID is a humanitarian necessity for financial inclusion. The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation has committed more than $200 million to initiatives such as the Modular Open Source Identity Platform. Such systems use AI for advanced biometric authentication and real-time liveness detection, which industry players such as Microsoft and Okta claim are essential to detecting sophisticated fraud and deepfakes that supposedly evade traditional systems.

But the integration of AI into digital public infrastructure (DPI) has accelerated surveillance-state encroachments and represents a dangerous consolidation of power. The World Economic Forum's push for a unified digital identity framework promises creation of a centralized digital panopticon in which access to basic societal functions — banking, healthcare, transportation, spending, communication, etc. — is gated by opaque AI algorithms and the Deep State operatives who control them. There is significant concern that the behavioral analytics used to verify identity will instead be used for social-credit monitoring or automated exclusion.

If that sounds far-fetched, consider that digital product passports (DPPs) are increasingly being used in the retail world for supply-chain control. DPPs are digital IDs for physical items, and are embedded in products, with retailers such as Target implementing them to comply with regulations such as the EU's Ecodesign for Sustainable Products Regulation. Furthermore, researchers at the University of Washington have demonstrated that conductive threads can be magnetized to store digital data directly within fabric, enabling clothing to function as a password storage device. In parallel, advancements in vaccine delivery include research from North Carolina State University on vaccine-coated dental floss designed to trigger an immune response, as detailed in a July 2025 study in Nature Biomedical Engineering. This needle-free method is touted to enhance ease of administration and overcome patient hesitancy regarding traditional injections.

Photo by Zhang Dagang/VCG via AP

## Public Safety

Public safety is another promise offered by AI proponents. However, the rapid proliferation of AI-enhanced surveillance is fundamentally altering the nature of public space, moving beyond simple recording to active, real-time behavioral analysis. Industry leaders are increasingly transparent about this shift; Oracle Chairman Larry Ellison recently predicted a future of constant monitoring, stating during a 2024 meeting that AI-managed camera networks will ensure that "citizens will be on their best behavior because we are constantly re-

The integration of AI into digital public infrastructure (DPI) has accelerated surveillance-state encroachments and represents a dangerous consolidation of power.

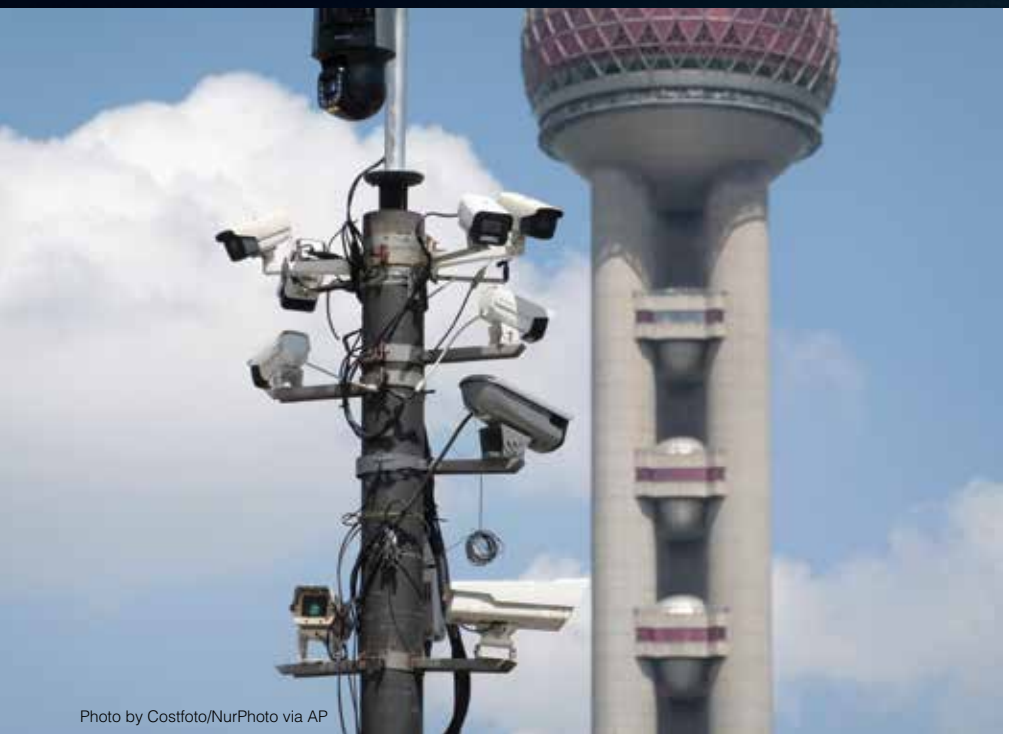

Photo by Costfoto/NurPhoto via AP

cording and reporting everything that's going on." Traditional closed-circuit television requires manual review. However, promotional materials from firms such as Flock Safety and Veritone highlight the "force multiplier" effect of AI, which can automate facial recognition, track "co-appearance" (those with whom you interact), and even utilize "predictive policing" algorithms to identify potential threats before they manifest.

While these systems are marketed under the banner of public safety, critics argue they create a pervasive "digital dragnet." Data from these cameras does not exist in a vacuum; it is often aggregated with information from data brokers and corporate entities. As documented by the Electronic Frontier Foundation, this "surveillance capitalism" enables the fusion of physical location data with digital records of financial transactions, health metrics from wearables, and even political affiliations gleaned from social media. This convergence effectively eliminates the expectation of privacy, as the government increasingly bypasses traditional warrants by purchasing this granular data directly from private tech companies, a practice recently scrutinized in reports by the Brennan Center for Justice.

## Voting Systems

AI cheerleaders are also framing its integration into the electoral process as a solution to voter apathy and accessibility barriers. The World Economic Forum (WEF) suggests that AI-driven civic assistants could provide personalized information on candidates, while blockchain-integrated AI could enable remote voting from home computers or mobile devices. Proponents, such as Voatz co-founder Nimit Sawhney, argue that digitizing the ballot empowers the citizen by removing the "physical friction" of polling places.

Once again, we see "convenience" as the excuse for control. Remember, that was the purported reason for transitioning from paper ballots to voting machines. However, J. Alex Halderman, a leading computer science professor at the University of Michigan and a frequent expert witness on election security, has warned that moving toward internet-based or AI-managed voting creates systemic vulnerabilities in which a single digital exploit could alter thousands of votes without a physical audit trail. Another consequence of this "convenience" is the potential erosion of the secret ballot; as AI systems link biometric identity to a digital vote, the anonymity that has protected voters for more than 250 years could be technically compromised. Furthermore, the shift to home-based voting risks "coerced voting," in which a voter could be pressured by others in the household — a social dynamic that the physical privacy of a traditional voting booth was specifically designed to prevent.

## Banking

The global financial sector is accelerating the transition toward digital currencies, with AI acting as a core technology for managing transactions, as noted by the International Monetary Fund. IBM Research tells us that AI algorithms enable real-time fraud detection and enhanced security. These arguments for streamlined digital payment infrastructures and improved operational efficiency are also used to promote central bank digital currencies (CBDCs).

Yet CBDCs would grant governments unprecedented surveillance powers and the ability to "de-bank" citizens based on political activity. The Cato Institute warns that a CBDC could become a financial panopticon, allowing bureaucrats to monitor every transaction in real time and even impose programmable restrictions on how money is spent. Your account could be frozen or closed, and your money confiscated. When the electricity is out, you will have no access to your money. Tellingly, even U.S. Federal Reserve Governor Christopher Waller has expressed skepticism, stating that the purported benefits, such as faster payments, are already being achieved through private innovations, making a government-run digital dollar unnecessary and potentially risky to the private banking sector.

## Employment

Not only is AI poised to replace your money, it also has the potential to replace *you*. The transition to an AI-driven economy is fundamentally reshaping how wealth is generated and distributed, leading many economists to warn of a future in which human labor is no longer the primary driver of profit. A 2023 report from Goldman Sachs estimated that generative AI could automate the equivalent of 300 million full-time jobs, start-

ing with white-collar administrative and legal roles before moving into blue-collar sectors through advanced robotics. This displacement has led tech leaders such as Sam Altman, CEO of OpenAI, to advocate for a "universal basic income" (UBI), suggesting that as AI creates immense wealth, a government-funded stipend will be necessary to meet basic needs. Altman has noted that in a world where AI produces most goods and services, focus must be placed "on taxing capital rather than labor, and we should use these taxes as an opportunity to directly distribute ownership and wealth to citizens." Similarly, Elon Musk told attendees at a 2024 tech summit that we are headed toward a "universal high income" because "AI will be able to do everything."

However, this shift toward a cashless society dependent on a state-provided UBI presents an obvious threat to human agency and freedom. The Cato Institute argues that decoupling income from work removes the incentive for individual innovation and grants the state unprecedented control over a person's livelihood. In a report for The Heritage Foundation, analysts expressed concern that a "programmable" digital currency — linked, of course, to a UBI — would allow the government to monitor and restrict spending based on social behavior or political alignment. From this perspective, the "convenience" of an automated, cashless economy could lead to a loss of private property and personal dreams, as the primary means of earning a living is replaced by a state-managed distribution system.

We are already starting to see the employment effects of AI in real time. Oracle recently sent an email to 30,000 employees telling them they no longer have jobs. The savings in payroll, says the company, will supply it with $8 billion to $10 billion to build data centers.

## The Growing Threat of AI Data Centers

Data centers themselves present myriad dangers, which explains the examples of community opposition detailed at the beginning of this article. Those are hardly isolated examples or one-offs. We are witnessing an explosion of AI data centers being built across the nation. According to the James Madison Institute, "the United States maintains clear dominance in this sector, housing approximately 5,300 operational data centers, representing 45% of the global total of 11,800 facilities." The *Washington Examiner* reports that in the United States, Virginia leads the pack, with 320 in operation, followed by Texas, Georgia, Pennsylvania, Illinois, and Ohio.

These numbers are set to skyrocket once the data centers currently planned and under construction are complete. If you don't already have one in your backyard, the likelihood is high that you soon will. Now is the time to prepare to push back. Let's look at the reasons to oppose them.

Jim West/UCG/Universal Images Group/Newscom

### Water

Data centers tap into both surface and underground aquifers to cool their facilities. "A typical data center uses 300,000 gallons of water each day," reads a 2025 Brookings Institution report, "but large data centers can use an estimated 5 million gallons of water each day." To put those numbers in perspective, a small data center's water use equals the approximate volume of a full Olympic-sized swimming pool every two days; hyperscale data centers gulp down roughly eight of those pools *daily*. In terms of equivalent use, these numbers equal the demand of 1,000 and 50,000 households, respectively.

To make matters worse, many data centers are located in water-stressed regions. The World Resources Institute highlights that two-thirds of new facilities are in areas such as Arizona and Texas, risking aquifer depletion, and experts are already warning that aquifers are not an infinite resource. Peter Colohan of the Lincoln Institute of Land Policy describes data centers as "a giant soda straw sucking water out" of local basins that cannot replenish as quickly as they are depleted. With about 80 percent of data-center water evaporating, there is real risk of freshwater bankruptcy, sinkholes, and seismic disruptions, as well as cost-prohibitive energy prices for pumping water from ever-deeper wells.

### Energy

Speaking of energy, the rush to construct data centers is colliding head-on with limits of the American power grid, as data centers' high-performance proces-

AP Photo/Gene J. Puskar

sors consume energy at a rate far outpacing traditional computing. Industry promoters acknowledge that AI models involve analyzing massive datasets, a process requiring specialized hardware that runs hot and hungry. Goldman Sachs analysts project that data-center electricity demand will surge by up to 165 percent by 2030.

Based on current demand, these numbers are conservative at best. Take Amazon's $11 billion campus in New Carlisle, Indiana: Project Rainier. At full capacity, the data center draws 2.2 gigawatts of power, equivalent to the energy needs of more than a million homes. The local utility already phased in a residential rate hike of 16.75 percent between July 2025 and June 2026. The Citizens Action Coalition found that the utility's average residential bill had already jumped 26.7 percent in the 12-month period ending July 2025. Meanwhile, individual residents have reported their monthly utility bills nearly doubling over the past year.

## Land Use

Project Rainier sits on 1,200 acres of what was flourishing cornfields less than two years ago, a hint of the vast amounts of land being gobbled up in the AI boom. According to TechTarget, average sites now span 224 acres (a 144-percent increase since 2022), and hyperscale facilities often exceed 1,000 acres. Many campuses are strategically positioned for expansion space in the future. Hines Research estimates that an additional 40,000 acres of "powered land" will be needed globally over five years to meet projected growth through 2030.

Protesters complain of the industrial blight of these sprawling, windowless warehouses, frequently sited in rural or semi-rural areas where land is cheaper and power access is available, converting open spaces into impermeable surfaces of steel, concrete, and pavement. Critics argue that the massive facilities not only disrupt rural character and scenery, but also generate disruptive noise — often at levels that can harm hearing (85 to 100 decibels). Citizens of Loudoun County, Virginia, addressed a recent congressional roundtable with reports of sleep disruption, headaches, and other adverse effects. Residents also fear negative effects on local property values, with concerns that proximity to data centers can deter homebuyers due to aesthetic and quality-of-life impacts. In places such as Ohio, Indiana, and Wisconsin, proposals to rezone hundreds of acres of farmland have sparked backlash, with some projects withdrawn due to public pressure.

The most significant cost of the physical footprint comes in lost agricultural land and production. Once converted to data-center use, the land is no longer fit for farming. The American Farmland Trust has highlighted ongoing losses of U.S. farmland to non-agricultural development (e.g., solar, wind, carbon capture, green/blue hydrogen, etc.), and data centers compete directly for large, flat parcels ideal for crops. In regions such as Virginia and the Midwest, offers reaching millions of dollars per acre have tempted some owners. But some farmers reject multimillion-dollar bids, emphasizing the irreversible impact on food-production capacity.

*Farm Equipment* recently put the gravity of the situation into perspective for urban dwellers, writing that "we're losing 2,000 acres of farmland each day to non-ag uses with a 75 million acres loss from 1997-2022, says USDA. At a time when 39% of all U.S. farmland is rented, every acre of fertile farmland lost has a cost that most aren't comprehending — even ... ag economy stakeholders. Most working farmers won't find the economies of scale needed on their 'own' acres; they need access to more land to shoulder the full breadth of their investments."

The solution to this coming food crisis is waiting in the wings, where UN and World Economic Forum bureaucrats

have been aggressively promoting a no-meat, insect-ridden diet for years. The UN website informs us that insects are a "food rich in protein" with a smaller carbon footprint than livestock, while WEF provides "5 reasons why eating insects could reduce climate change" and assures us that "we must eat less meat" to save the planet from catastrophic global warming. With their massive land-use footprint, AI data centers are helping pave the way to that irrational, dystopian future planned for us.

### How Do We Stop the Insanity?

We must stop or vigorously control the relentless progress of AI; our individual freedom, free enterprise, and private property rights are at stake. Fortunately, the solution is within our reach, as residents of Ohio can attest.

Ohio is a hotbed in the battle over AI data centers. The state's efforts in this sector have been significantly shaped by billionaire Leslie Wexner, founder of L Brands (parent of Victoria's Secret) and owner of The New Albany Company, a major real-estate development firm. Wexner, a business associate of Jeffrey Epstein in the 1980s and 1990s, has helped transform the formerly rural area of New Albany, near Columbus, into a hub for corporate and industrial growth, including data centers.

Wexner and his partners began acquiring farmland in New Albany in the late 1980s. They worked to change zoning and established a public-private partnership with the village of New Albany. Over time, this arrangement granted The New Albany Company significant influence over development, taxation, and infrastructure decisions in the area, effectively creating a monopoly of privately led community planning.

Today, the New Albany area hosts dozens of data centers operated by companies including Amazon, Google, Meta, and Microsoft. Reports indicate more than 40 data centers in or near New Albany, with the broader central Ohio region seeing more than 100 such facilities. The New Albany Company has profited from land sales and development deals tied to this growth. Wexner himself has benefited from related investments, including in AI infrastructure firms.

Wexner's heavily subsidized development model has residents concerned about impacts on farmland, energy use, water resources, and local governance, but copycats threaten other rural Ohio communities. Local activists opposing unchecked data-center expansion face challenges from these established public-private frameworks. However, resistance has grown across Ohio and other states, and several planned projects have been paused or scaled back as officials review potential effects on infrastructure, electricity rates, and community character.

In March, St. Albans Township in Licking County (adjacent to the New Albany area) became the first township in its county to effectively ban new data centers. Trustees removed data-processing facilities from permitted conditional uses in the zoning code. Trustee Mike Washington stated that the board was carrying out "the will of the people" to preserve the rural character of the township.

At least three other townships near Columbus and New Albany have taken steps to temporarily halt or restrict data-center construction. Meanwhile, a statewide effort is underway to place a constitutional amendment on the November 2026 ballot that would prohibit construction of large data centers (those with power demand exceeding 25 megawatts). Organizers with Ohio Residents for Responsible Development must collect approximately 413,500 valid signatures from voters in at least 44 of Ohio's 88 counties by July 1 to qualify the measure.

Other states are experiencing similar success. Denver is planning a one-year moratorium on new data-center construction over concerns about high water use and energy consumption. Citizens of Peculiar, Missouri, have successfully blocked a $1.5 billion project due to noise and impacts on property values. And roughly $14 billion in projects in Arizona have been withdrawn, stopped by resident pushback over blight, noise, and resource-strain concerns.

It might seem tempting to implore the federal government to come to the rescue and slam the brakes on the proliferation of new AI data centers. But the last thing we need is more unconstitutional federal interference in our lives. The solution is at the local level. Here's what to do:

First, research actions currently before your local city or county government. Distribute known information (such as this article) to your elected officials and community influencers.

Second, attend public meetings held by data-center promoters. Plan specific questions about water and electricity use. When representatives claim jobs will be created, ask how many, and for how long. Be prepared for them to say that everything is wonderful, and be prepared to show that the facts prove otherwise.

Most importantly, prepare a system of communication with residents of the entire community so they will know how plans will affect them. Local newspapers, radio, and social media are important tools. Recruit volunteers to help. You will see your movement grow. Remember that your local and state representatives are being vigorously lobbied by the pro-AI crowd, but these data-center advocates' greatest fear is a dedicated and well-organized force of local opposition armed with truth. They know we can win, and are fighting back. Uncontrolled AI may be the greatest threat to our freedoms today, and it's up to us to stop it. ■

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# QUICK QUOTES

"If you look at the material coming through that's critical to chip production … to fertilizer and food, and … to energy, you're talking about massive dislocation of the global economy. And if it goes on for long enough — I mean, we have Peru, Thailand, other people talking about doing Covid-style shutdowns to save gas — you're talking about intentionally shutting down the global economy."
**Catherine Austin Fitts** *warned Paul Buitink of Reinvent.Money that the shutdown of the Strait of Hormuz was deliberately designed to cause "Covid 2.0."*

"How dare you speak that way on Easter morning to the country? Who do you think you are? You're tweeting out the f-word on Easter morning?... You are mocking me and every other Christian."
*On his podcast in April,* **Tucker Carlson** *laid into Donald Trump over an aggressive social-media post that the U.S. president aimed at Iran.*

"Trump is unpredictable and he does everything to generate revenue. That's why our gold is no longer safe in the Fed's vaults."
**Michael Jäger**, *head of the European Taxpayers Association, explained why France removed the last of its gold from Federal Reserve banks, without mentioning the decline of the petrodollar and the rise of the multipolar world.*

"A healthy child born today remains healthier if they take no vaccines whatsoever."
**Dr. Peter McCullough** *revealed results of 12 studies, published collectively by the McCullough Foundation, on the* Lila Rose Show *in April.*

"This paper demonstrates a critical side channel within telecommunication optical fiber that allows for acoustic eavesdropping.... Our results demonstrate the ability to recover critical information, such as human activities, indoor localization, and conversation contents, raising important privacy concerns for fiber-optic communication networks."
*Researchers from Hong Kong published* **Hiding an Ear in Plain Sight** *in March, warning that fiber-optic cables in your home can be used to spy on you.*

"Before you begin to study the different forms of government under which we live, I wish to call your attention to something that is at the foundation of all government. I wish you to think for a few moments upon the subject of the government of one's self, or *self-control*."
*First published in 1908, the grammar-school textbook* Essentials in Civil Government *by* **Samuel Eagle Forman** *begins with a moral admonition missing from today's classrooms.*

"We can't do business on a dead planet. If we're going to protect natural systems, one of the solutions is to bring nature onto the balance sheet; bring nature into the ways that decisions are made within business to allocate a value to it."
**Lindsay Hooper**, *CEO of the Institute for Sustainability Leadership, addressed the World Economic Forum in 2024 about her ideas for engineering scarcity, ostensibly to save the planet.* ■

**— Compiled by Rebecca Terrell**

# IS IT A JUST WAR — OR JUST A WAR?

AP Photo/Emilio Morenatti

## AT A GLANCE

- **There is a "time for war and a time for peace," just as the Bible informs.**
- **No nation should go to war except as a last resort.**
- **G.K. Chesterton observed that "the only defensible war is a war of defense."**
- **Augustine of Hippo and Thomas Aquinas are credited with developing a set of principles informing us of when war is morally permissible and how a just war should be fought.**

***by Selwyn Duke***

"War is not the best way of settling differences," noted Christian apologist G.K. Chesterton in 1915. "It is the only way of preventing their being settled for you." He also insisted that the "only defensible war is a war of defense." Put these two principles together and add a few ingredients, and you have Just War doctrine.

Conflict is part of the natural world, with animals often fighting over territory, mates, and food. Man is no exception, though as a rational being he can organize his violent campaigns. And, just as he builds on a grander scale, he can cause destruction on a grander scale. Man has long struggled with war, too, not only trying to become more proficient at it so that he can prevail over his enemies, but also, when heeding his better angels, trying to devise ways to forestall conflict. And

*Selwyn Duke has written for* The New American *for more than a decade. He has also written for* The Hill*, Observer,* The American Conservative*, WorldNetDaily, American Thinker, and many other print and online publications.*

these priorities have led to extremes. On one hand, there are the staunch militarists such as the ancient Spartans. Then there are the Amish and Quakers, famous for their strict pacifism; the former might be said, if it can be said, to represent a "quaint heresy."

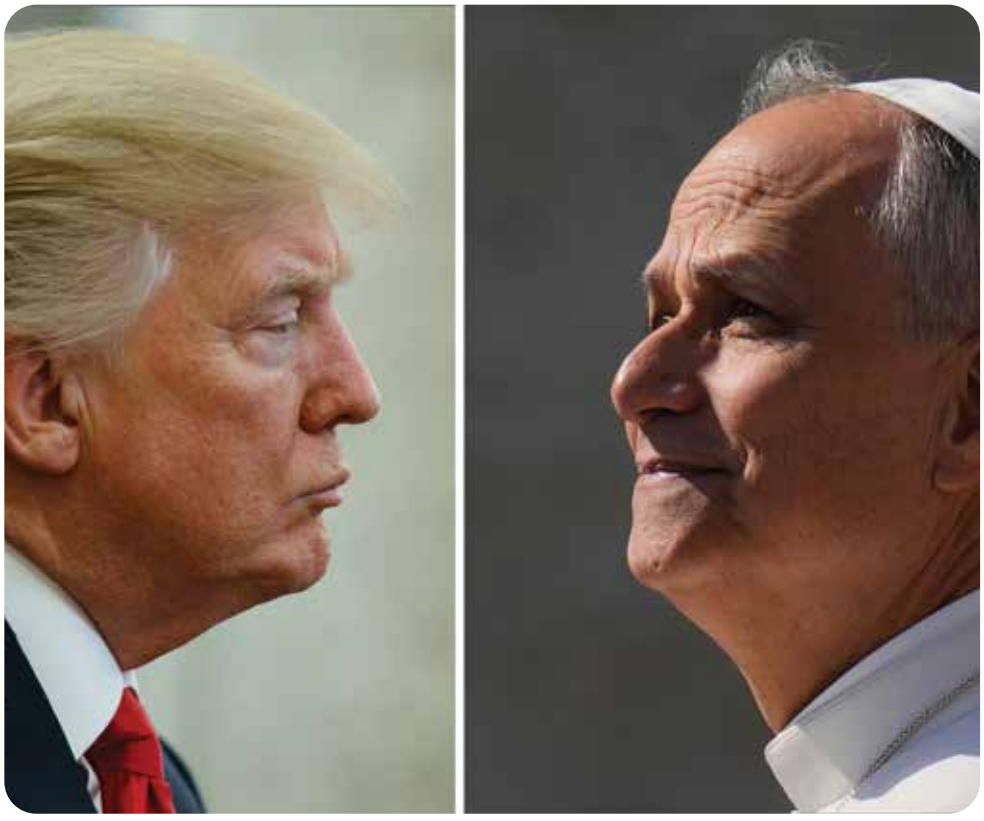
Yet, in truth, as Ecclesiastes 3:1-8 states:

> There is a time for everything,
> and a season for every activity under the heavens:
> a time to be born and a time to die,
> a time to plant and a time to uproot,
> a time to kill and a time to heal,
> a time to tear down and a time to build,
> ... a time to love and a time to hate,
> a time for war and a time for peace.

When that time for war is at hand, however, also becomes a point of conflict. Just consider the recent dust-up between President Donald Trump and Pope Leo XIV over the American/Israeli military action against Iran. Popes rarely respond directly to world leaders, but April 7 was one of the exceptions. The impetus was an eyebrow-raising Truth Social message Trump posted that day.

"A whole civilization will die tonight, never to be brought back again," the president warned, referencing Iran. "I don't want that to happen, but it probably will."

Trump was likely, in reality, just exercising the high-pressure, maximum-leverage, think-big negotiating philosophy he explicated in his 1987 book *The Art of the Deal*. (It's amazing how it seems to elude virtually all professional pundits how much of Trump's behavior is deal-making artifice.) Nonetheless, many considered it a threat too far, and Pope Leo made clear he was among them, calling it, in part, "truly unacceptable." The pope also, on April 10, wrote on social media that Christ's disciples are "never on the side of those who once wielded the sword and today drop bombs." Given, however, that Leo's own church promulgates Just War doctrine — from which it logically follows that dropping bombs *can* be warranted — "never" appears inaccurate and hyperbolic.



AP Photos/Evan Vucci and Gregorio Borgia, File

Whatever the case, Trump, not one to turn the other cheek (unless it's the other fellow's "other" cheek with a hard slap), hit back. "Leo should get his act together as Pope, use Common Sense, stop catering to the Radical Left," he wrote on Truth Social April 12, "and focus on being a Great Pope, not a Politician."

But while people can argue about whether a given conflict, such as the Iran campaign, is just, there's again no doubt that war can be. In fact, Just War doctrine is espoused not only by the Catholic Church, but by Christians generally. Now is a good time to explore a bit about the doctrine's history and, then, what it actually dictates.

## Wisdom From Antiquity

While correctly associated with Christian fathers such as Augustine of Hippo and Thomas Aquinas, just war has been a subject for thinkers to ponder since pagan times. As website ThinkingWest.com wrote in 2024, citing the ancient Greeks, "Within the works of Herodotus, Thucydides, Plato, and Aristotle, Just War concepts can be found in a primordial state." Herodotus supposed the "gods" were ultimately the "first cause" of war, the site explained, while Thucydides believed the impetus was "within humanity itself." ThinkingWest then stated that philosopher Plato "concurred with Thucydides' idea that saw human nature as the driving force behind war, however he rejected the idea that war was inevitable." Plato believed that man's aggressive nature was controllable and necessary to defend the nation, but that failure to constrain it could invite your land's destruction. He also hinted at principles in the *jus in bello* (law in war) category of just war: proportionality and noncombatant immunity. For example, Plato emphasized that not all adversary-city inhabitants should be considered enemies and be harmed, as many are friendly and innocent. He also said that war should be reserved only for non-Greeks.

Photo by Morteza Nikoubazl/NurPhoto via AP

Plato's student Aristotle developed the concepts further. Among his just-war principles, however, was that war can be licit if, related ThinkingWest, "it is to the advantage of the state in respect of glory or wealth or power or the like." Of course, this is rightly anathema to most modern ears (though it would surely suit some of our world's governments just fine!).

Later, Roman thinkers also pondered just war. On a somewhat amusing note, the Romans, being human, could put a happy face on their conquests and convince themselves their wars were just. As Roman historian Livy approvingly wrote of Rome, "'There is,' people said, 'one nation which at its own cost, through its own exertions, at its own risk has gone to war on behalf of the liberty of others.... [It even] crosses the seas in order that nowhere in the wide world may injustice and tyranny exist, but that right and equity and law may be everywhere supreme.'" So, you see, you were blessed if you saw the Roman legions marching your way.

(In fairness, Rome did do much to spread civilization, inclusive of the concept of the rule of law and Christianity. So the above is not complete delusion.)

So as is evident, pagan just-war counsel was incomplete and mixed misconceptions with Truth. It would take Christianity-forged theologians to explicate the matter and develop sound, comprehensive Just War doctrine.

## Enter Augustine and Aquinas

The main Christian thinker credited with formulating Just War doctrine is the aforementioned Augustine (354-430 A.D.). He "drew upon Christian teachings as well as Greek and Roman philosophy to propose a set of principles that defined a just versus an unjust war," the Religious History Nerd (RHN) blog relates. "Generations of theologians and philosophers have refined and expanded Augustine's ideas about war. Today much of Augustine's work is reflected in the international humanitarian law[s] that were codified in the Geneva Conventions after World War II."

In fact, Augustine's teachings were quite revolutionary. After all, "For some time before Augustine, most Christians of the Roman Empire had embraced pacifism," RHN also informs. "In the interpretations of many early Church fathers, Jesus taught absolute nonviolence. Christians were sometimes executed — and became martyrs — for refusing to fight for Rome. The priest Hippolytus of Rome (170-235) [even] refused to baptize soldiers."

While often noble, this very Amish attitude doesn't completely reflect Scripture, as the earlier-cited Ecclesiastes "a time for war" line reflects. So the doctrinal development Augustine sparked was necessary (e.g., Christendom couldn't have defended itself against the medieval Islamic invasions, and survived, without it). His work was later refined, too, notably by Thomas Aquinas (circa 1225 to 1274 A.D.). Aquinas' contribution was that in his *Summa Theologica*, he condensed and systematized just-war ideas into a clear, concise, and logically structured framework; he integrated them into a broader moral theology of charity, prudence, and the common good.

So what are these all-important principles? Website TheLawtoKnow.com accurately related them in 2024, writing:

1. **Jus ad Bellum:** This component focuses on the justification for initiating a war and is guided by the following principles:

• **Just Cause:** A war is only justifiable if it aims to confront a significant wrong, such as defending against an aggressor or preventing severe harm.

• **Legitimate Authority:** Only duly recognized and legitimate leaders or governments should declare war.

• **Right Intention:** The intention behind waging war must be morally sound, aiming to secure peace and justice rather than pursuing territorial gain or revenge.

• **Last Resort:** War must only be considered when all peaceful alternatives and negotiations have been exhausted.

• **Probability of Success:** A war should only be waged if there is

AdobeStock/by vukkostic

a reasonable chance of success to avoid unnecessary loss of life.

• **Proportionality:** The anticipated benefits of war must outweigh the potential harm or destruction that it will cause.

[2.] **Jus in Bello:** This principle addresses the conduct within war to ensure that military actions remain ethical:

• **Discrimination:** Combatants must distinguish between combatants and non-combatants, ensuring that civilians are not intentionally targeted.

• **Proportionality:** The force used in war should be proportional to the objectives and should avoid excessive or unnecessary suffering.

• **Military Necessity:** Operations should be confined to those that are necessary to achieve legitimate military objectives.

It cannot be overstated how these fruits of Christianity have transformed the world. Just ponder the medieval warfare standard: A city that didn't surrender was generally considered fair game for being sacked. This often meant one to three days of uncontrolled looting, pillaging, rape, killing (especially of fighting-age males), and destruction. Oh, there was method to this madness, as the practice served as both punishment for stubborn resistance (which cost the attackers lives and time) and deterrence — the sacking threat encouraged cities to surrender quickly. But it nonetheless was immoral. (War crimes, especially among non-Christian conquering forces, could be even worse, too. Thirteenth-century Mongol invaders, for instance, would sometimes virtually annihilate entire cities.)

A most beautiful example of these Augustinian fruits — one of many — would manifest itself more than 1,400 years after the eponymous Christian theologian's death. That is, as Confederate General Robert E. Lee wrote in his General Orders No. 73, on June 27, 1863, there have

> been instances of forgetfulness, on the part of some, that they have in keeping the yet unsullied reputation of the army, and that the duties exacted of us by civilization and Christianity are not less obligatory in the country of the enemy than in our own.
>
> The commanding general considers that no greater disgrace could befall the army, and through it our whole people, than the perpetration of the barbarous outrages upon the unarmed and defenseless and the wanton destruction of private property, that have marked the course of the enemy in our own country.
>
> Such proceedings not only degrade the perpetrators and all connected with them, but are subversive of the discipline and efficiency of the army, and destructive of the ends of our present movement.
>
> It must be remembered that we make war only upon armed men, and that we cannot take vengeance for the wrongs our people have suffered without lowering ourselves in the eyes of all whose abhorrence has been excited by the atrocities of our enemies, and offending against Him to whom vengeance belongeth, without whose favor and support our efforts must all prove in vain.
>
> The commanding general therefore earnestly exhorts the troops to abstain with most scrupulous care from unnecessary or wanton injury to private property, and he enjoins upon all officers to arrest and bring to summary punishment all who shall in any way offend against the orders on this subject.

We certainly wouldn't have heard such sentiments from Genghis Khan, Attila the Hun, or Tamerlane. That is, unless they'd had the good fortune to have been born and molded in a *matured* Christian land. (As with an individual, it takes time for a civilization to "grow in the faith" and become a new creation.)

Note, too, Lee's lament that war crimes "degrade the perpetrators and all connected with them." Most true: Being psychological poison, sin harms the oppressor as well as the oppressed. Is it a coincidence, after all, that periods of intense social and moral decay — the "Roaring '20s" and sex-and-drugs '60s — occurred in the wakes of our two great wars, WWI and WWII? This isn't to say those conflicts were or weren't just, only that involvement in even just wars can damage souls. Imagine what unjust ones can do.

It all underlines the simple truth that winning wars to preserve civilization while being uncivilized in their prosecution may, ultimately, be a loss. ■

# The President vs. Congress: Who Possesses What War Powers?

Doug Mills/The New York Times via AP, Pool

## AT A GLANCE

- The Founding Fathers did not want one man to decide when to take the country to war.
- The Constitution granted Congress the power to declare war.
- The Founders preferred the word "declare" to "make" because they recognized the president may need to repel a sudden attack.
- When Trump attacked Iran without seeking a declaration of war, there was no "imminent" threat.

***by Gary Benoit***

Under the U.S. Constitution, who possesses the war-making powers? Is it the president, the Congress, or a shared responsibility between these two branches of government? If the latter, how are the powers divided?

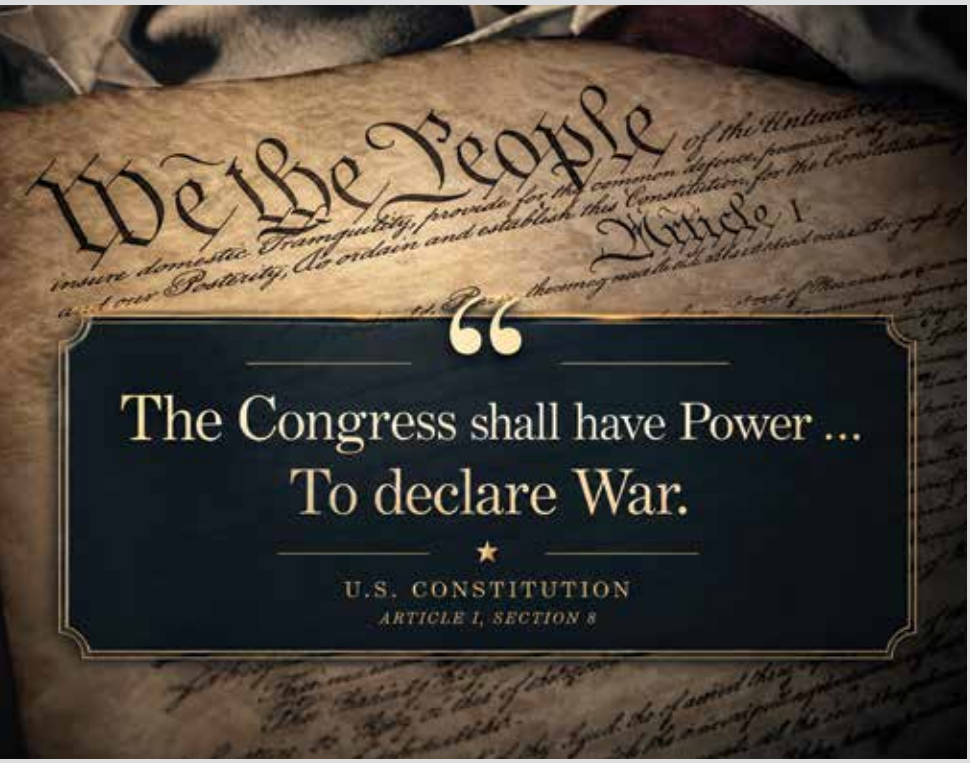
How about the Iran war?

According to President Donald Trump, he possessed the constitutional authority to launch the war without congressional approval. And he did not seek congressional approval. Two days after launching Operation Epic Fury on February 28, he informed Congress in a letter: "I directed this military action consistent with my responsibility to protect Americans and United States interests both at home and abroad and in furtherance of United States national security and foreign policy interests. I acted pursuant to my constitutional authority as Commander in Chief and Chief Executive to conduct United States foreign relations."

He added, "I am providing this report as part of my efforts to keep the Congress fully informed, consistent with the War Powers Resolution (Public Law 93-148)." Under this resolution, the president "shall terminate" the use of U.S. armed forces against a foreign nation within 60 days if there is no congressional declaration of war or authorization. (No such time frame for unilateral military action on the part of the president is specified in the Constitution, which grants to Congress the power "to declare war.")

On May 1, when the War Powers Resolution's 60-day time frame expired, Trump informed Congress that his military operation against Iran was *already* terminated. In a letter, he reasoned: "On April 7, 2026, I ordered a 2-week ceasefire. The ceasefire has since been extended. There has been no exchange of fire between United States Forces and Iran since April 7, 2026. The hostilities that began on February 28, 2026, have terminated."

*Gary Benoit is editor-in-chief of* The New American.




AI-generated image (ChatGPT/OpenAI)

Meanwhile, as of this writing, the U.S. is continuing its blockade of the Strait of Hormuz. In his May 1 report to Congress, Trump explained, "I have and will continue to direct United States Armed Forces consistent with my responsibilities and pursuant to my constitutional authority to conduct United States foreign relations and as Commander in Chief and Chief Executive."

Thus far, most congressional Republicans have agreed with Trump, though there have been notable exceptions such as Senator Rand Paul (R-Ky.) and Representative Thomas Massie (R-Ky.), two of the most constitutionalist-minded lawmakers in Congress according to this magazine's Freedom Index. Congressional Democrats, on the other hand, have opposed Trump on his unilateral military actions against Iran. This Republican/Democrat dichotomy has caused many MAGA conservatives to support the president's unilateral action, although others have broken with Trump on this issue.

And temperatures are running high. When Secretary of Defense Pete Hegseth appeared before the House Armed Services Committee on April 29, he did not mince words regarding his disdain for congressional opposition to the president's war policies. "The biggest challenge, the biggest adversary we face at this point are the reckless, feckless and defeatist words of congressional Democrats, and some Republicans," he said. Later in the hearing, he told Representative John Garamendi (D-Calif.), "Your hatred for President Trump blinds you to the truth of the success of this mission."

Certainly, abhorrence of Trump causes many Americans to blindly oppose whatever he says or does, just because it's Trump. This phenomenon has even been given a name: Trump Derangement Syndrome. But there are also Americans who blindly support whatever Trump says or does, just because it's Trump. Regardless of what one thinks of Trump, all of us should evaluate his military actions in Iran based on principles, not personalities or parties. Let's now take a hard look at the principles, particularly the *constitutional* principles, and apply them to the Iran war.

## The Founders' View

It should go without saying that America's Founding Fathers did not believe that a single person should be entrusted with the power to decide when to plunge the country into the crucible of war. In fact, when they wrote the Constitution, they assigned the lion's share of war powers to Congress.

Under the Constitution, the president is "Commander in Chief of the Army and Navy of the United States, and of the Militia of the several States, when called into the actual Service of the United States." But his powers as commander in chief are restricted by the following *congressional* powers: "To declare war"; "To raise and support Armies"; "To provide and maintain a Navy"; "To Make Rules for the Government and Regulation of the land and naval Forces"; "To provide for calling forth the Militia to execute the Laws of the Union, suppress Insurrections and repel Invasions"; and "To provide for organizing, arming, and disciplining the Militia."

In *The Federalist*, No. 69, Alexander Hamilton contrasted the president's war powers with those of the British king: "The President is to be commander-in-chief of the army and navy of the United States. In this respect, his authority would be nominally the same with that of the king of Great Britain, but in substance much inferior to it. It would amount to nothing more than the supreme command and direction of the military and naval forces, as first general and admiral … while that of the British king extends to the *declaring* of war and to the *raising* and *regulating* of fleets and armies — all which, by the Constitution under consideration, would appertain to the legislature." (Emphasis in original.)

James Madison, whose role at the Constitutional Convention was so great that he became known as the Father of the Constitution, agreed that Congress, not the president, should be the decider when it comes to going to war. In a letter to Thomas Jefferson in 1798, he observed, "The Constitution supposes, what the History of all governments demonstrates, that the Executive is the branch of power most interested in war, and most prone to it. It has, accordingly, with studied care, vested the question of war in the Legislature." Abraham Lincoln, the first Republican president, made a similar observation in 1848:

"Kings had always been involving and impoverishing their people in wars, pretending generally, if not always, that the good of the people was the object. This our [1787] Convention understood to be the most oppressive of all Kingly oppressions; and they resolved to so frame the Constitution that *no one man* should hold the power of bringing this oppression upon us."

But how about a *good* man? Not according to the Founding Fathers, who recognized the corruptive influence power can have on imperfect human beings. Thomas Jefferson warned in 1798, "In questions of power then, let no more be heard of confidence in man, but bind him down from mischief by the chains of the Constitution." And Madison put it this way in *The Federalist*, No. 51, "If men were angels, no government would be necessary. If angels were to govern men, neither external nor internal controls on government would be necessary. In framing a government which is to be administered by men over men, the great difficulty lies in this: you must first enable the government to control the governed; and in the next place oblige it to control itself." The internal controls on the government include the division of war powers, with the Congress possessing the lion's share, including the power "to declare war."

But, it is reasonable to ask: Is the power to *declare* war equivalent to the power to *make* war? If it is, then why didn't the Founders use the word "make" to avoid any ambiguity in the language of the Constitution? Actually, they initially used the word "make" — before changing it to "declare" — for a very good reason. Madison reported the discussion in his *Notes of Debates in the Federal Convention of 1787*:

> Mr. Madison and Mr. [Elbridge] Gerry moved to insert "*declare*," striking out [the congressional power to] "*make*" war; leaving to the Executive the power to repel sudden attacks.
>
> Mr. [Roger] Sherman thought it stood very well. The Executive should be able to repel and not to commence war….
>
> Mr. Gerry never expected to hear in a republic a motion to empower the Executive alone to declare war….
>
> Mr. [George] Mason was against giving the power of war to the Executive, because [he is] not safely to be trusted with it…. He was for clogging rather than facilitating war; but for facilitating peace. He preferred "*declare*" to "*make*."

The Senate Foreign Relations Committee accurately summarized in its February 9, 1972 "Report on War Powers": "The Constitutional Convention at first proposed to give Congress the power to 'make' war but changed this to 'declare' war, not, however, because it was desired to enlarge Presidential power but in order to permit the President to take action to repel sudden attacks" — *without violating the Constitution*.

AI-generated image (ChatGPT/OpenAI)

It should go without saying that America's Founding Fathers did not believe that a single person should be entrusted with the power to decide when to plunge the country into the crucible of war. In fact, when they wrote the Constitution, they assigned the lion's share of war powers to Congress.

Robert A. Taft

AP Photo/John Lindsay

The Constitution is clear that Congress possesses the power to "declare war," but it does not address the question as to when Congress should exercise that power. During the early years of the Republic, the understanding was that the United States should mind its own business and follow a noninterventionist policy in foreign affairs, not going to war unless necessary to defend the American people. In his Farewell Address to the nation, George Washington said, "It is our true policy to steer clear of permanent alliances with any portion of the foreign world." And John Quincy Adams, America's sixth president, observed in his 1821 Independence Day Address that America "goes not abroad, in search of monsters to destroy. She is the well-wisher to the freedom and independence of all. She is the champion and vindicator only of her own…. She well knows that by once enlisting under other banners than her own ... she would involve herself beyond the power of extrication, in all the wars of interest and intrigue, of individual avarice, envy, and ambition, which assume the colors and usurp the standard of freedom."

Over time, that policy of noninterventionism eventually gave way to glob alism. But even after two world wars and the founding of the United Nations, Americans still called for putting their country first. In 1951, Senator Robert Taft (R-Ohio), whose stature in the Republican Party was so great that he was known as "Mr. Republican," advocated "A Foreign Policy for Americans" in his book of that title: "No foreign policy can be justified except a policy devoted without reservation or diversion to the protection of the liberty of the American people, with war only as the last resort and only to preserve that liberty."

When Trump ran for president in 2016, he called for putting "America first." Later, in his 2019 State of the Union address, he reminded Americans about the costs of the "endless wars" he had opposed under past administrations: "Our brave troops have now been fighting in the Middle East for almost 19 years. In Afghanistan and Iraq, nearly 7,000 American heroes have given their lives. More than 52,000 Americans have been badly wounded. We have spent more than $7 trillion in the Middle East. As a candidate for President, I pledged a new approach. Great nations do not fight endless wars." His "new approach" did seem to be moving America away from the "endless wars" of the past. And in his election-night victory speech for his second term as president in 2024, he promised, "I'm not going to start a war, I'm going to stop wars."

## Trump's Military Interventionism in Iran

President Trump's decision to join Israel in going to war against Iran is certainly not what noninterventionist-minded Americans expected based on his past America First statements and his first term in office. This raises two related questions: Why did he do so; and why did he do so without first seeking and obtaining congressional approval?

One argument for bypassing Congress is that the threat was so imminent that there was no time to get congressional approval prior to being hit. When Trump launched Operation Midnight Hammer on June 21, 2025, Speaker of the House Mike Johnson (R-La.) supported his unilateral decision, saying, "The President made the right call, and did what he needed to do. Leaders in Congress were aware of the urgency of this situation and the Commander-in-Chief evaluated that the imminent danger outweighed the time it would take for Congress to act." But was the threat *that* imminent? Not according to the 2025 *Annual Threat Assessment of the U.S. Intelligence Community*, which was released just three months prior to Midnight Hammer. The report said, "We continue to assess Iran is not building a nuclear weapon and that [now-deceased Iranian leader Ali] Khamenei has not reauthorized the nuclear weapons program he suspended in 2003."

In any event, Operation Midnight Hammer obliterated Iran's nuclear capabilities, according to Trump and others. On June 21, 2025, the very day of the attack, Trump told the American people, "Iran's key nuclear enrichment facilities have been completely and totally obliterated." Three days later, he posted on Truth Social, "It was my great honor to Destroy All Nuclear facilities & capability, and then, STOP THE WAR!"

And then, on February 28 of this year, Trump launched Operation Epic Fury, now often referred to as the Iran war. In his announcement on that day, Trump explained to the American people, "Our objective is to defend the American people by eliminating *imminent threats* from the Iranian regime, a vicious group of very hard, terrible people." (Emphasis added.) Later in his announcement, he said, "They rejected every opportunity to renounce their *nuclear ambitions*, and we can't take it anymore." (Emphasis added.)

Cover Images via AP Images

"Nuclear ambitions" and "imminent threats" sound like two very different things so far as justification for a preemptive strike is concerned. So how imminent was the threat, particularly the nuclear threat, on February 28? At the time, Trump was vague about how imminent the threat was. But he was very clear later. On March 23, before boarding Air Force One, a reporter brought up former Director of the National Counterterrorism Center Joe Kent's assertion that Iran was not an imminent threat. "I think it was an imminent threat," the president responded. "I think that Iran, if they — if we didn't bomb them with the B-2 bombers, now that set them back, but if we didn't hit them with the B-2 bombers, they would have had a nuclear weapon within two weeks to a month. And if they had a nuclear weapon, they would have used it as soon as they got it." If the "two weeks to a month" claim were true, then that meant that Iran would have been able to deploy a nuclear weapon by the end of March if Trump had not militarily intervened to prevent it from happening.

How believable is that claim? If accurate, it means that Iran was able to rebuild its "obliterated" nuclear program in less than a year — assuming, of course, the program really was obliterated on June 21, 2025. But an Iranian regime being able to have a nuclear weapon by the end of March of this year also clashes with findings in the 2026 *Annual Threat Assessment of the U.S. Intelligence Community.* Using information available as of March 14, it states: "Prior to Operation Epic Fury, Iran was pursuing increasingly capable missile systems, was non-compliant with its Chemical Weapons Convention obligations, had not abandoned its intention to conduct R&D of biological agents and toxins for offensive purposes, was intending to try to recover from the devastation of its nuclear infrastructure sustained during the 12-Day War [June 2025], and refused to live up to its nuclear obligations with the IAEA [the International Atomic Energy Agency], including refusing to allow IAEA access to key nuclear facilities." Of course, "intending to try to recover from the devastation of its nuclear infrastructure" is far different from being just two weeks to a month away from having a weapon when Operation Epic Fury was launched on February 28.

## Principles First

Trump is not the first president to decide to go to war without the constitutionally required declaration of war from Congress. Nor is he the first president to overblow a threat to justify a war. (Remember the claims about Iraq's reputed "weapons of mass destruction" that were used to justify U.S. military intervention in that country?) But the fact that past presidents have transgressed the Constitution when it comes to war powers (and other policies, too) does not justify Trump's doing so.

It is true that Iran under the ayatollahs is an oppressive, terroristic regime. No sane person would want to see it possess nuclear weapons. (No sane, freedom-loving person wants the tyrannical regimes of North Korea, China, or Russia to possess nuclear weapons either — but they do.) But does this justify launching a war against Iran? Does it justify a president — any president —taking matters into his own hands, even if he sincerely believes it is the right thing to do? If the answer is yes, then the ends justify the means. Moreover, if the answer is yes, then the Founding Fathers were wrong in their belief that no single man should possess the power to decide when to go to war, and that America should avoid interjecting itself in foreign quarrels. Whether the president is Trump or someone else should not change the answers to these questions. ■

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# Fast-tracking Britain on the Fabian Freeway to Socialism

Mark Thomas/ZUMA Press/Newscom

## AT A GLANCE

- The Fabian Society has long been the power behind the throne guiding British politics.
- Both Prime Minister Keir Starmer and London Mayor Sadiq Khan are Fabians.
- Fabians share a common goal with communists: socialism.
- Fabians work to install socialism via gradualism and stealth, as opposed to overt revolution.

***by Christian Gomez***

For more than a century, the Fabian Society in the United Kingdom has been a quiet yet key driving force in British politics. Founded in 1884 by a cadre of middle-class intellectuals in London, the society has been systematically pursuing a strategy of gradual, incremental change toward a socialist model of centralized government. Rather than inciting Marxist and Leninist revolutionary upheaval to achieve their collectivist aims, the Fabians pursue a more patient path, one of "permeation" and "gradualism" — infiltrating existing institutions, influencing policy from within, and steadily reshaping society to fit socialist designs.

*Christian Gomez is research project manager for The John Birch Society.*

Rose L. Martin's exhaustive 1966 book *Fabian Freeway: High Road to Socialism in the U.S.A.* documents how Fabianism seeks to transform the Anglo-American world, warning that what seems like benign reform is in fact a methodical blueprint for socialism masquerading under the guise of "respectability." Lest anyone be deceived into thinking otherwise, as Loyd Wright writes in the Foreword to *Fabian Freeway*, "The ultimate objective of the Fabian Socialist movement is no different than the ultimate objective of the Communist movement." And for anyone needing a reminder of that objective, recall the final sentence from the publication *The Negroes in a Soviet America*, written by James W. Ford and James S. Allen, members of the Communist Party USA: "Join the Communist Party, help create the powerful, great vanguard which is leading the masses towards Socialism." The common objective of card-carrying Communist Party members in the United States and those of the Fabian Society in the U.K. is socialism.

Today in the U.K., the Fabian Society's influence has reached new heights. With Keir Starmer as prime minister and Sadiq Khan as mayor of London — both long associated with the Fabian Society — Fabian socialists effectively occupy the two most powerful posts in British political life. This reality underscores the society's enduring role as the intellectual "vanguard" of the Labour Party and the engine driving Britain toward socialism. This didn't happen overnight, like a burst pipe; rather, it's the result of a trickling infiltration and capture of Britain's leading institutions and power.

Tom Nicholson/ZUMA Press/Newscom

## Who Are the Fabians?

The Fabian Society was named after the Roman general and dictator Quintus Fabius Maximus — nicknamed "Cunctator" ("Delayer") — who wore down Hannibal's forces by slow, patient tactics rather than direct confrontation. This symbolism perfectly encapsulates the Fabian Society's method of gradual *evolution* rather than immediate *revolution* to socialism. As Martin explains on page 12 of her book, the Fabians "wanted to change the world through a species of propaganda termed 'education,' which would lead to political action." Thus the tortoise, an animal known for its slow movement, became their emblem and logo, representing their patient yet unimpeded march toward socialism.

The Fabian Society's objectives were clearly laid out from the beginning in the *Basis*, which was the society's founding credo that every member from 1887 onward was obliged to follow. The *Basis* remained their credo until 1938, when it was adopted as the society's constitution. Beginning with the words "The Fabian Society consists of Socialists," the original *Basis* of 1887 read as follows:

> It [the Fabian Society] therefore aims at the reorganisation of society by the emancipation of land and Industrial Capital from individual and class ownership, and the vesting of them in the community for the general benefit.… The Society accordingly works for the extinction of private property in land.... The Society further works for the transfer to the Community of such Industrial Capital as can conveniently be handled socially. For the attainment of these ends the Fabian Society looks to the spread of Socialist opinions, and the social and political changes consequent thereon.… It seeks to achieve these ends by the general dissemination of knowledge as to the relation between the individual and Society in its economic, ethical and political aspects.

Put succinctly, Fabians called for the abolition of private ownership in land and capital, the transfer of economic power to the "community" (i.e., the government), and the steady dissemination of socialist ideas. Unlike Marxist revolutionaries, the Fabians emphasized respectability and long-termism. Their method was not open rebellion, but deep and subtle penetration, placing members in political parties, academia, journalism, and government ministries. Over time, they became a guiding force within the British Labour Party, supplying its leaders and policies.

As Martin warned on page 19 of *Fabian Freeway*, the danger lay not in dramatic upheaval but in the slow, nearly invisible erosion of liberty: "What the *Basis* proposed was nothing less than social revolution, to be achieved by devious means over a period of time rather than by direct action." It was, as Martin described it, "the most genteel war cry ever uttered," one that masked radical ends behind moderate-sounding reforms.

Rather than inciting Marxist and Leninist revolutionary upheaval to achieve their collectivist aims, the Fabians pursue a more patient path, one of "permeation" and "gradualism."

Lord Callaghan, left, and Tony Blair

AP Photo/Richard Lewis

The Fabian Society openly admits that its goal is to use gradual reforms to push Britain toward radical socialism. In their 2023-24 annual report, the Fabians describe "Fabianism" in the following manner:

> The Fabian tradition informs how we think and what we do. Our commitment to Fabianism means we support the fight against inequality, the power of *collective action* and an *internationalist outlook*. We believe in social progress, evidence, expertise, rationality and *long-termism*. We advocate gradualist, reformist and democratic means in a journey towards *radical ends*. As a society, we celebrate our historic achievements and champion the *collectivist institutions built by Fabians*. We promote Fabian arguments within politics today and support the political development of people who share our values. [Emphasis added.]

And by supporting leaders such as Keir Starmer and Sadiq Khan, the Fabian Society continues to further expand those collectivist institutions, erode individual liberty, and promote globalist controls.

**Starmer: The Fabian at 10 Downing St.**

Sir Keir Rodney Starmer, the Labour leader in Parliament who became prime minister on July 5, 2024, is deeply rooted in the Fabian tradition. His connection to the society long predates his premiership. He was a member of the Fabian Society before his election to Parliament, and even served on the society's executive committee, where he participated in its governance and shaped its direction. In 2021, he authored a 35-page Fabian pamphlet titled *The Road Ahead*, outlining his vision for a "fairer, more secure and prosperous Britain, built on Labour values." This work fits neatly into the Fabian pattern of policy packaged as moderation and being for "the people," but nevertheless steering the nation toward deeper state control. "Labour in government would show that we take seriously people's demands for more control. We will deliver social justice, stronger communities and unlock potential by unlocking power, wealth and opportunity across the United Kingdom. But we will not do that by decree — we will put power and control in the hands of the people, whether at work, in accessing public services, or over the decisions that affect their lives," Starmer wrote.

The Fabians have been explicit about Starmer's place in their legacy. In an article titled "On the Horizon" by Andrew Harrop, published on the Fabian Society's website on May 23, 2024, they boast: "Every single Labour prime minister has been a Fabian and if Labour wins in July Keir Starmer will join their ranks. Keir was a Fabian before he was elected to parliament, and served on our executive committee." Just four days after that article was published, Starmer told the BBC, "I would describe myself as a socialist."

Such admissions confirm that Starmer stands firmly within a lineage — stretching from Ramsay MacDonald (the country's first Labour PM) to Clement Attlee (who succeeded Conservative PM Winston Churchill's first premiership after World War II) to Harold Wilson in the 1960s and '70s — of Fabians who have left indelible socialist marks on the U.K.

Starmer's current socialist policies further reinforce this continuity. We can already see the fruits of this strategy in his government's aggressive restructuring of Britain's infrastructure and labor laws. Immediately upon taking office, Starmer launched Great British Energy, a publicly owned company headquartered in Aberdeen, seeded with £8.3 billion (about $11.2 billion) in public funds extracted through a punitive windfall tax on oil and gas. While marketed as a clean-energy initiative, it functions as a state-owned investment vehicle designed to co-invest in and ultimately manage energy infrastructure. Concurrently, his government moved to ban all new coal-mining licenses, effectively capping domestic coal extraction and shutting down the U.K.'s final coal-fired power station in September 2024. This is a textbook example of Fabian gradualism: socializing the investment in and ownership of future infrastructure without the obvious and politically toxic optics of aggressively seizing existing private companies — essentially stealth socialism. Not surprisingly, opposition Reform UK and Conservative voters have accurately pegged these collectivist initiatives as costly "socialist vanity projects" that destroy British energy security, making the country reliant on foreign imports rather than lowering consumer bills.

This same gradualist blueprint was quickly applied to the transportation sector through the Passenger Railways Services Act 2024. Rather than inciting public panic by spending billions of taxpayer pounds to forcibly buy out private rail contracts immediately, the state will simply "absorb" them for free as they naturally expire, transitioning operators such as South Western Railway

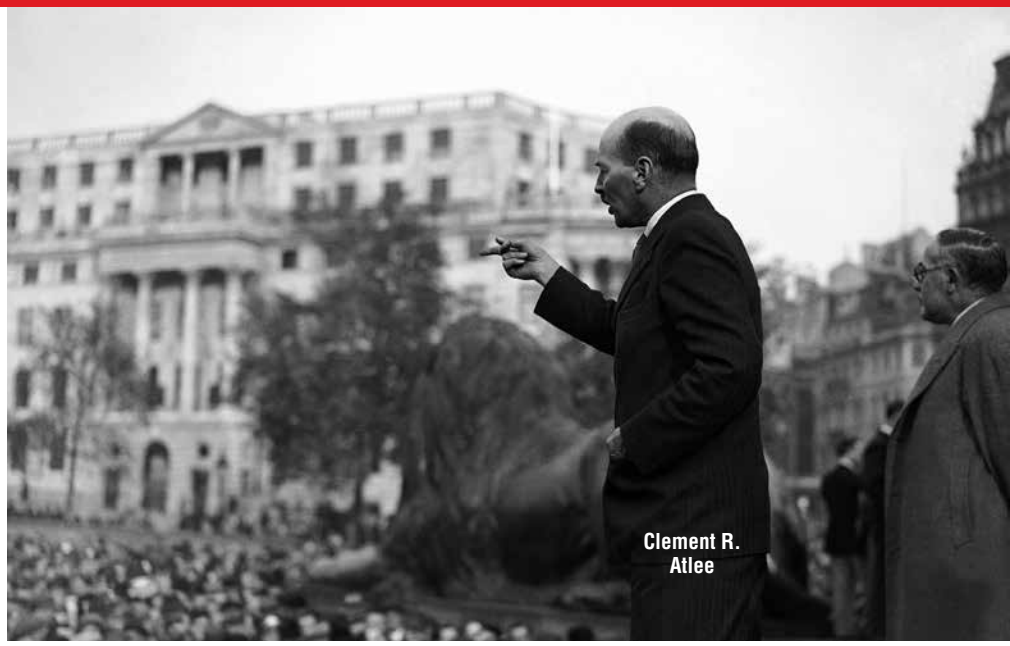
to the newly established, government-run Great British Railways. It achieves the socialist goal of nationalized public transportation infrastructure through the guise of "pragmatic," legal, and fiscally conservative-sounding rhetoric.

Beyond infrastructure, Fabian tenets of state planning, wealth redistribution, and hamstringing the free market are evident in Starmer's domestic policies. A flagship 2024 manifesto pledge was the top-down mandate to build 1.5 million new homes over five years — another classic Fabian push for mass public housing and "land reform." Meanwhile, Starmer's restructuring of the "growth and skills levy" to allow the state to co-manage and direct workforce training alongside private employers, coupled with a significant 6.7-percent hike to the National Living Wage in 2024 (and an even steeper 16-percent bump for 18-to-20-year-olds) perfectly aligns with the Fabian Society's pursuit of wealth redistribution and legislated social justice under the guise of "protecting workers."

These moves are all part of Starmer's proposed "Modern Industrial Strategy" (a 10-year plan in which the U.K. government would take a more active and interventionist role in shaping the economy) and advancing the "Green Prosperity Plan" (the U.K.'s equivalent of the "Green New Deal" to achieve the UN's 17 Sustainable Development Goals of the 2030 Agenda), and they follow the Fabian strategy of incremental socialism.

Promoting his "new industrial strategy" in an opinion piece published in the *Financial Times* on June 22, 2025, Starmer wrote:

> I am proud to launch a new industrial strategy for the nation today. Robust, strategic and *unapologetically long-term*, it meets the challenges of our era. A 10-year plan to make the UK the best country to invest in anywhere in the world. But also, a *new relationship between business and government* defined by partnership. The deal is simple. *Government provides the strategic certainty*. And that means businesses are free to do what they do best and create wealth. Of course, some will still say this means *the government is intervening more in the economy. I don't deny that.* I think it is our role to back British businesses, invest in our comparative advantage and make bets in pursuit of growth and productivity. [Emphasis added.]



AP Photo

Starmer doesn't mince words about how he envisions the U.K. government's interventionist role in the British economy. His words are reiterated in the Foreword to the 160-page "Modern Industrial Strategy" proposal presented to Parliament:

> We need a new relationship between business and government, where government provides the strategic certainty that allows businesses to do what they do best: create wealth. This requires a *more muscular approach to government*: one prepared to back British businesses, invest in our comparative advantage, and take punts in pursuit of growth and productivity. [Emphasis added.]

In summary, Starmer's 10-year plan would see the U.K. government as an active architect of the economy — directing priorities, funding desired development, "guiding" (i.e., leading) industries, and reshaping the British economy. It's a blueprint for state-led economic central planning, with the U.K. government as the focal point of deciding how and in what direction Britain's economy will grow to "compete" with foreign markets. What Starmer proposes is a government-managed scheme with the illusion of free enterprise.

On the international and regional integration front, Starmer has moved to reestablish the U.K.'s ties with the European Union. On May 19, 2025, he held the first UK-EU summit since Brexit, in which he and European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen made a new agreement. Among the provisions in the agreement, the U.K. agreed to align its standards with the EU to enable more farming and food exports and extend the current arrangement that grants EU fishing boats access to U.K. waters until 2038.

Like his predecessors, Starmer sells these policy initiatives as "pragmatic" responses to Britain's current challenges. Yet the cumulative effect is obvious. Gradually, step by step, private initiative and national sovereignty are being displaced by central authority and global entanglements — the very tendencies that Martin highlighted as Fabian goals nearly 60 years ago in *Fabian Freeway*.

Alamy Live News via AP

### Khan: London's Fabian Mayor

If Starmer represents Fabianism at the national level, Sir Sadiq Aman Khan embodies its influence at the municipal and cultural heart of Britain. By the time Khan assumed office as mayor of London on May 9, 2016, he was already a mainstay of the Fabian Society. From 2008 to 2010, he served as chairman of the society, and in 2016 he was identified on its website as the vice president. He has also edited Fabian booklets such as "Punishment and Reform: How our justice system can help cut crime" and "Our London: The Capital Beyond 2015." Additionally, in 2008, he authored the booklet "Fairness not Favours: How to reconnect with British Muslims," also published by the Fabian Society.

As one would expect from a Fabian, his governance of London has emphasized aggressive urban planning, climate policies that further centralize and expand government oversight, and identity politics as a tool to fracture and reconfigure traditional British norms and society. As Martin observed of the Fabian Society in England, it has "succeeded in penetrating and permeating organizations, social movements, political parties, until today its influence pervades the whole fabric of daily life."

### Fabian Formula in Action

The leadership of Starmer and Khan exemplifies the Fabian formula of "penetration" and "permeation." Both men work within the existing system, presenting their programs as "reasonable" reforms. Yet their direction is unmistakably socialist — eroding private property, expanding state power, and subordinating Britain's national independence to globalist and regional integration schemes.

Starmer's push for government-directed industrial policy and "green" planning, along with Khan's relentless pursuit of more centralized urban and sustainable planning, demonstrates Fabian gradualism in action. Each initiative, taken on its own or examined in isolation, might appear "benign," "modest," or "pragmatic." But cumulatively, all advance the very "high road to socialism" that Martin chronicled in her book. As she explained on page *x* (between the Foreword and the first chapter), "Altogether this no longer spells creeping Socialism but *onrushing* Socialism, of which Communism is merely the final stage. Incredible? Not to those who have kept their eyes open and their senses alert, instead of being anesthetized by slogans or lulled by promises of perpetual affluence."

Fabianism's subtlety has had an insidious influence on the U.K. Since Fabians present themselves as "moderates" with an aura of respectability, their radicalism is easily overlooked or ignored. As Martin noted on page 2 of her book, "Such individuals made Socialism appear attractive as well as respectable. Being socially beyond reproach, it would be difficult to attack them, however dubious the doctrines they favored." This remains true today. When watching Starmer and Khan deliver remarks or promote a new policy, one might not immediately associate them with Vladimir Lenin or Fidel Castro, yet their Fabian pedigree reveals they are part of a long-term plan to reshape Britain along such Marxist lines.

Like Starmer, the Fabian Society has always prided itself on patience. Its leaders in the late 19th century spoke openly of waiting decades for the fruits of their collective labor to ripen for a future harvest. Today, with both the U.K. premiership and mayorship of London firmly in Fabian hands, those fruits are flourishing. What began in a small, inconspicuous London parlor in 1884 has matured into a ruling presence in Britain's political life.

In *Fabian Freeway*, Martin warned that the real danger of Fabianism is not in its rhetoric but in its results, as it slowly yet relentlessly drifts toward socialism under the guise of "pragmatic" moderation and reform. With Keir Starmer and Sadiq Khan in key government positions of leadership, the Fabian Society now stands astride Britain's most powerful ministries and institutions. Its policies and affiliations are not coincidental or inconsequential; they are the fruit of a strategy more than a century in the making.

With the Fabian tortoise at long last having inched its way to Number 10 Downing Street and City Hall in east London, the question now facing Britons is whether they will awaken to the nature of this creeping advance or continue down the Fabian freeway, as fellow travelers toward the serfdom of socialism, from which there might be no return. It's high time that both Britons and their American cohorts across the pond paid closer attention to the Fabian Society. And there is no better place to start than with Rose L. Martin's *Fabian Freeway*, which has since been republished by Western Islands, the publishing arm of The John Birch Society. Brand-new paperback copies are available for purchase from WesternIslandsPublishing.com for $10 (about £7.50) plus shipping, or from Amazon.co.uk in the U.K. ■

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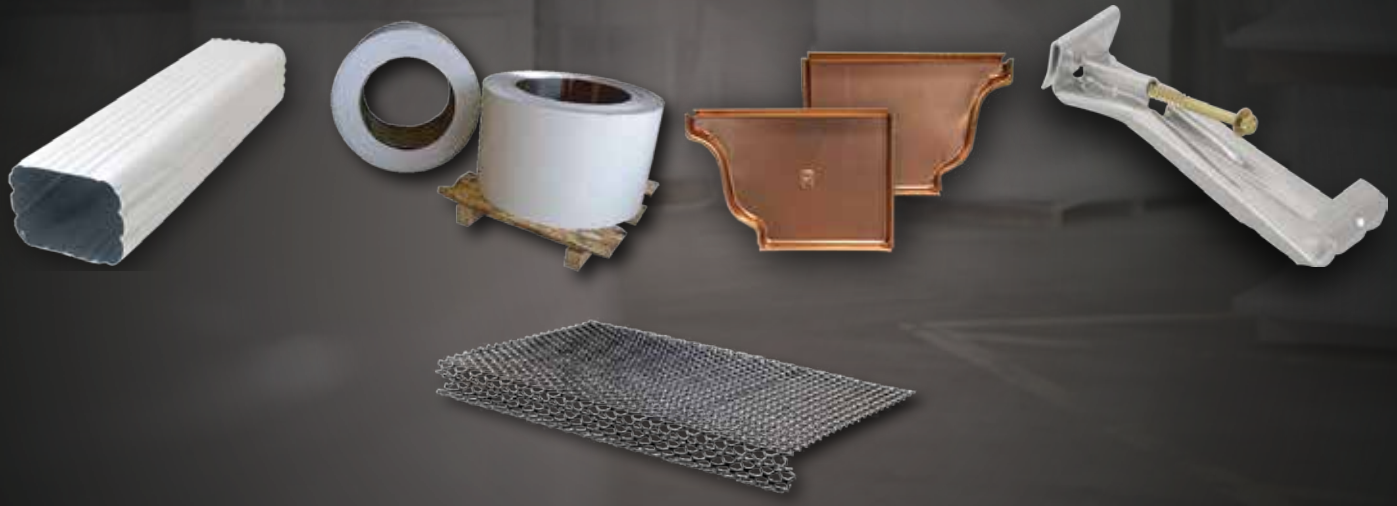

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# The Economic Impact of the Iran War

Amirhosein Khorgooi/ISNA via AP

## AT A GLANCE

- The United States remains partially dependent on Saudi oil.
- The U.S. will be less vulnerable than others to the oil-price shock, but not immune.
- The crisis in the Persian Gulf will affect food stocks as well as oil.
- China, Japan, South Korea, and India are being harmed by the Strait of Hormuz closure.

***by Robert P. Murphy***

The headline prices for crude oil and the stock market indicate that investors believe the Iran War — and in particular, the closing of the Strait of Hormuz — represents a serious but manageable problem. To be sure, the now-familiar pattern of President Donald Trump's bellicose deadlines followed by gracious-sounding extensions suggests that the adults in the room won't let the standoff spiral out of control.

Nonetheless, as of this writing (in late April), the Strait is still effectively closed. For example, on April 19 only three vessels transited the waterway (one inbound and two outbound), which should be contrasted with a pre-crisis norm of 100-plus ships crossing daily. Furthermore, 870 vessels remain trapped in the Persian Gulf, having been in the wrong place when the war broke out. From February (prewar) to March, the flow of oil through the Strait dropped from 20 million barrels per day to two million.

Before the crisis, the Strait of Hormuz was a petroleum artery, accounting for 25 percent of seaborne crude oil and 19 percent of the global trade of liquefied natural gas (LNG). Its blockage is thus extremely consequential. Even if the Strait were opened for business immediately, at this point I believe a global recession is unavoidable. If the Strait stays closed for several more weeks, we will see major economic disruption in Europe and Asia along with humanitarian crises in the Gulf States and large portions of Africa. Finally, if the Strait should stay closed for several more *months*, it will spell a global depression, with perhaps North America being the only continent to avoid catastrophe. I realize such warnings might strike some as hyperbole, but I will devote the rest of this article to a justification of my claims.

### Insulated, but Not Immune

Although President Trump rightly told the Europeans that the United States doesn't need oil via the Strait of Hormuz, he was wrong to argue that crude-starved nations could turn to us instead. Although one may claim that the United States is a net "oil exporter," strictly speaking this is only true *if we include all petroleum products* (such as gasoline and jet fuel). If we are talking merely about barrels of crude oil itself, then the United States continues to be a net *importer*.

According to data from the U.S. En-

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AP Photo/Jenny Kane

ergy Information Administration, in the week ending February 27 (just before the war began on February 28), crude imports to the United States were 6.3 million barrels per day (mb/d), while exports out of the United States were 4.0 mb/d. For the week ending April 17 (seven weeks into the conflict), U.S. crude imports were 6.1 mb/d, while exports were 4.8 mb/d. So net imports had fallen, to be sure, but even now the United States still takes in more crude from foreign countries than it sends to them.

There is some nuance here, in that one element of these gross flows is that the United States imports crude oil from foreign countries in order to refine it into petroleum products to send back out of the country. Yet even taking this wrinkle into account, the United States is *not* crude-oil self-sufficient, because our refineries are designed to process heavy "sour" crude (with more sulfur), while the fracking boom in shale produces light, "sweet" crude (lower in sulfur). In other words, American motorists still need foreign oil flowing into the country to maintain their current lifestyle.

If we look at the country of origin for U.S. crude imports, we see an interesting illustration of the disparate impact the war has had on the various players. The week before the conflict broke out, the United States imported 520 thousand barrels per day (kb/d) from Saudi Arabia, and that number was virtually unchanged at 515 kb/d seven weeks later. The Saudis were able to redirect their exports from the Persian Gulf to the Red Sea, via the east-west pipeline ending at Yanbu. However, this relief valve will also be blocked if the Houthis in Yemen should decide to harass Red Sea shipping in solidarity with Iran.

In contrast, over the same stretch, Nigerian imports to the United States dropped from 202 kb/d to 136 (actually hitting *zero* for two weeks), Iraq's from 154 to 48, and Libya's from 71 to zero. On the other hand, Venezuela's increased from 143 kb/d to 499, adding support to the theory that the U.S. operation to oust Venezuelan dictator Nicolás Maduro in January was partly an exercise in solidifying U.S. supply chains before attacking Iran.

Rather than staring at figures of crude-oil flows, we can look at crude and gasoline *prices* for the clearest indication that the United States — though blessed with abundant stockpiles of fossil fuels — is still vulnerable to global shocks. In the week ending February 17, the mid-week price of West Texas Intermediate (WTI) crude was $65 per barrel. Seven weeks later, it was $93. During the same time frame, Brent crude — the benchmark for Europe — jumped from $71 to $115, reflecting the obvious logistical bottlenecks causing Europe relatively *more* pain.

Likewise for gasoline: The week before the war broke out, U.S. regular (all formulations) averaged $2.80 per gallon. Seven weeks later, it had risen to $3.96. And this isn't a seasonal change, because back in 2025, during the same time frame, gasoline went from $3.00 to $3.04.

Interestingly, the actual production of crude oil in the United States is slightly down over the period, dropping from 13.7 million barrels per day (mb/d) to 13.6 mb/d. If the Strait remains constrained indefinitely, U.S. production could eventually increase to close some of the gap. And in that scenario, the combination of American economization (due to higher prices at the pump) and foreign thirst would eventually turn the United States into a bona fide *net* exporter of crude. But even with President Trump's "drill baby drill" attitude, it takes time to locate deposits and get new wells up and running. In any event, oil shipped to foreigners is oil unavailable for U.S. motorists, underscoring my argument that the United States, though cushioned, will still suffer if the standoff in the Persian Gulf persists.

## Energy Supplies Threatened

In normal times, China, Japan, South Korea, and India receive the lion's share of oil exports moving through the Strait, with each country receiving more than half of its oil from the region. (Japan typically gets 70 percent of its crude and six percent of its LNG via the Strait.) However, Japan and China both had

Alireza Masoumi/ISNA via AP

generous stockpiles of crude going into the conflict, which they can draw down to postpone genuine privation.

Europe is vulnerable to a disruption in LNG imports from the region, particularly as its potential flows from Russia have been interrupted due to the war in Ukraine. European airports are already cutting flights due to a shortage of jet fuel.

### Humanitarian Crisis Looming

Although the prosperous European and Asian countries may suffer economic misery from a sharp curtailment in energy supplies, with their wealth they can access scarce global supplies by paying higher prices. In contrast, there are a handful of poor countries that are already in or approaching crisis.

Bangladesh, for example, has forced offices to close by 4:00 p.m. and markets by 6:00 p.m. to reduce electricity consumption; they have even banned decorative lighting for private events such as weddings. In Myanmar, private citizens may only drive their vehicles on alternate days (based on license plate numbers), again in an effort to conserve fuel. The fuel shortage is exacerbating power outages in Nigeria, where almost half the population lacked access to the grid even before the war.

Yet perhaps the most alarming aspect to the closure of the Strait is the interruption of food stocks *into* the Gulf. In 2025, members of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) — Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) — imported 85 percent of their food, as it's hard to grow crops and raise livestock in the desert. The commentary I have seen focuses on the region's incredible reliance on desalination plants, which Iran has warned it will strike if Israel and/or the United States bombs Iranian energy and desalination infrastructure. But even if Iran stops all drone attacks on the mainland, so long as it keeps the Strait closed, it will effectively constitute a siege against its Gulf neighbors. With some 85 percent to 90 percent of Dubai's four million residents being foreign-born expats, how many would simply *leave* in the next six months if the flow of fresh food isn't restored? Imagine what that would do to Dubai's $100 billion-plus economy, and all of the financial transactions tied to the bustling city.

Speaking of food, an aspect of the war that I *have* seen frequently discussed is the impact on agriculture. The problem is that the Strait of Hormuz also supplies one-third of the global fertilizer trade. Countries such as Sudan, for example — already suffering from civil war — will see exacerbated famine when half of their fertilizer is held back. Even U.S. farmers warned in mid-April that with urea prices up almost 50 percent, the fertilizer shortage was affecting spring planting and would ultimately reduce future yields.

### Central Bank Setup

Amid the Covid panic, the Federal Reserve under Jerome Powell pumped in liquidity at a rate that even dwarfed what

If the Strait stays closed for several more weeks, we will see major economic disruption in Europe and Asia along with humanitarian crises in the Gulf States and large portions of Africa.

Adobe Stock

former Fed chair Ben Bernanke had done in the wake of the 2008 financial crisis. With the "un-inversion" of the yield curve, even before the outbreak of the war, I had expected the United States would fall into a recession this year. When you add in the energy shortages and supply chain disruptions described above, I will now be very surprised if the American economy can keep growing into 2027.

On this score, the policies of a new Fed chair (with Kevin Warsh being the likely choice as of this writing) are largely irrelevant. I subscribe to the so-called Austrian School's explanation of the business cycle. As economist Ludwig von Mises diagnosed it, the problem occurrs during an *unsustainable boom* period, when artificially cheap credit spawns malinvestments. Once the damage has been done, the best thing to do is stop pumping in artificial credit and let interest rates rise to the proper level, giving guidance to entrepreneurs on the actual state of the economy. Efforts to slash interest rates and pump in more liquidity won't stop the crash, but will merely set up the next boom-bust cycle.

## Chance for an Off-ramp?

I'm an economist, not a military strategist. But for what it's worth, here's what I think happened: Trump and some (though by no means all) of his inner circle, buoyed by the amazing Maduro operation, thought they could flex their might off the coast of Iran and scare them into submission. But in contrast to their meekness last June, this time the Iranian regime refused to roll over, presumably because they now believe they are in an existential battle. Consequently, it seems Trump was surprised to find himself in a situation where weeks into the conflict, leaders from around the world were telling him just how vital it is to reopen the Strait.

Personally, I had hoped Trump's attempt to wash his hands of the mess and tell the Europeans to secure the Strait if they wanted the oil would have given him the face-saving move he needed to restore the flow of commerce (albeit under Iranian control) without admitting the United States had lost.

It's true that if the Iranians had been allowed to keep imposing a toll on vessels moving through the Strait it would have been unfair and illegal relative to the pre-war baseline. But compared to the havoc from a continued blockade (now from both sides), that would have been arguably the best outcome at this point. For a frame of reference, the reported $2 million toll that Iran was levying on some oil tankers works out to an implicit "carbon tax" of a mere $2 per ton of $CO_2$. The EU's Emissions Trading System has traded between $50 and $100 per ton in recent years.

As anyone studying the debate over the war knows, there is much evidence that U.S. officials, including Trump himself, are subordinating American interests to those of our ally in this conflict. Regardless of this influence, it also seems undeniable that at several points Trump has tried to walk back from the brink without making it obvious that he had blinked. For the sake of the civilians in the Middle East, as well as energy consumers around the world, I hope he can work out some compromise that allows merchant ships to do their job. ■

JBS members and Clovis city officials at the Clovis City Council chambers

# Proudly Affirming America's Godly Heritage

*by Rebecca Terrell*

Walk into the City Council chambers in Clovis, California, and you'll immediately know what makes the city tick. The newly placed words "IN GOD WE TRUST" now adorn the wall behind the dais, thanks to a citizen-driven project funded by private donations. Those responsible gathered on March 18, when the words were installed, to celebrate the culmination of what began as a grassroots proposal. It ended up uniting the community in honoring our national motto and reminding visitors that the people of Clovis have their priorities in order.

## A Historic Installation: Bringing the National Motto Home

The addition of those four simple words was more than a mere change to the chamber. It was a heartfelt affirmation of Clovis' values and an acknowledgment of what makes our nation great. Mayor Vong Mouanoutoua, Mayor Pro Tem Diane Pearce, and Council Member Drew Bessinger joined community leaders in witnessing the installation. Two people appeared especially in the spotlight for having spearheaded the effort: Clovis John Birch Society (JBS) Chapter Leader Bill Scott, and Assistant Chapter Leader Kathy Reinhardt.

Their months of dedicated effort resulted in a unanimous 5-0 vote by the City Council on February 9. The chamber now stands as a beacon of what happens when citizens roll up their sleeves and make their voices heard. As one local leader put it, this achievement shows that "we can make a difference, and everyone should try — especially in our local communities."

## Citizens Lead the Charge

The journey started last September when members of the JBS Clovis Chapter, including Scott and Reinhardt, presented a proposal to adopt and display the national motto in the council chambers. Scott and his team gathered hundreds of petition signatures — 341 by one count — and rallied neighbors through town hall meetings, candidate forums, and everyday conversations.

Former JBS Field Coordinator Patty Cassio, who helped coordinate central California's efforts, captured the spirit perfectly in a message posted on social media: "This was a CITIZEN-run effort and CITIZEN-funded project that I am proud to have participated in. We have a wonderful Community where many Citizens are involved in Civic engagement."

JBS members didn't stop at petitions. They attended council meetings, school-board sessions, and election-integrity events, building relationships and fostering partnerships across Clovis. Private donations covered every penny of the materials and installation, ensuring Clovis taxpayers weren't burdened. The result? A chamber that now proudly reflects the values so many Clovis residents hold dear.

*Rebecca Terrell is a senior editor of* The New American.

### Overwhelming Community Support

This was no top-down decision, nor did Clovis leaders listen to only a vocal few. The city worked hard to gauge public sentiment. Staff conducted a representative survey from November 18 to December 23, drawing responses from 508 residents matched to U.S. Census demographics for race, ethnicity, age, and gender. The results were inspiring: 68 percent supported adding "In God We Trust" to the chambers, with support rising to 74 percent among those already aware of the proposal. Only 22 percent opposed, and 10 percent offered no opinion.

An open survey echoed these trends, while four "Meet the Mayor" events and online engagement pages gave every resident a chance to weigh in. Supporters highlighted the motto's alignment with Clovis values. Many cited its role as a familiar national symbol on currency and its reflection of local traditions.

Even amid a few voices expressing concerns about inclusivity, the council heard the majority and acted decisively. Council discussions praised the installation's private funding and the motto's nonpartisan, historical resonance. As Mayor Mouanoutoua noted, no decision pleases 100 percent of the people, but this one captured the heart of Clovis' 130,000 residents.

### The Enduring Significance of "In God We Trust"

The phrase "In God We Trust" isn't just words on a wall or a dollar bill. It is a powerful reminder of America's foundation. As Bill Scott told *The New American*, these words echo the Declaration of Independence's thunderous affirmations: "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights." America's founding documents openly declared that rights come from God, not government. The nation's Founders contended that our federal government exists to secure those rights through the consent of the governed — not to overreach into daily life.

Scott captured it beautifully: "In America, we trust in God, not the government. The government is there to serve us.... In America, we serve and trust God; government is supposed to protect that service and trust." Displaying the motto in Clovis honors that legacy, ensuring that future generations remember the self-evident truths that make this nation exceptional.

### How "In God We Trust" Became America's National Motto

The motto's roots run deep in history, first appearing in ancient Latin texts as *In Deo confidimus*. Historians note that supporters of the mid-18th-century volunteer Pennsylvania militia created a regimental banner featuring the English translation. Later, inspired by the American defense of Fort McHenry in the War of 1812, Francis Scott Key employed it in the poem that became our national anthem. The fourth and final stanza reads:

> O thus be it ever, when freemen shall stand
> Between their loved home and the war's desolation!
> Blest with vict'ry and peace, may the heav'n rescued land
> Praise the power that hath made and preserved us a nation!
> Then conquer we must, when our cause it is just,
> And this be our motto: "In God is our trust,"
> And the star-spangled banner in triumph shall wave
> O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave!

The phrase would first appear on U.S. coins in 1864 amid the Civil War. The capitalized "IN GOD WE TRUST" debuted on the two-cent piece, gradually spreading to other currency.

By the 1950s, during the Cold War era, Congress acted to make it official. On July 30, 1956, President Dwight D. Eisenhower signed Public Law 84-851, declaring "In God We Trust" the national motto of the United States. This replaced the de facto *E Pluribus Unum* ("Out of many, one") and mandated its appearance on all paper currency (following a 1955 law).

Today, it appears on coins, on bills, and in public spaces nationwide, a unifying emblem that has withstood challenges because it reflects America's true heritage without establishing any specific government-sanctioned religion. Clovis' display joins this proud tradition, connecting local governance to the broader story of America.

### A Model for the Future

This victory belongs to everyday heroes like Bill Scott, Kathy Reinhardt, Patty Cassio, and the many JBS chapter members who turned ideas into action. Diane Pearce shepherded the initiative through the council, while all members under Mayor Mouanoutoua's leadership demonstrated support and responsiveness. Their efforts prove that local involvement isn't just possible — it's powerful.

As Clovis celebrates America's 250th birthday this year, their installation stands as a shining example of both civic pride and virtuous humility. It invites every resident to engage, to trust in the principles that built this nation, and to celebrate the motto that binds us. "In God We Trust" — and in Clovis, citizens are showing the country what that truly means. ■

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# American Samson

## AT A GLANCE

- Paul Anderson came from very humble beginnings in Georgia.
- Anderson set many strength records despite a chronic kidney disease.
- He dedicated his life to Christ during the 1956 Olympics.
- He left a legacy of faith and patriotism alongside his athletic prowess.

***by Steve Bonta***

A light rain was falling over Moscow's Gorky Park on the evening of June 15, 1955. In those early years of the Cold War, the overhanging gloom was not due entirely to the weather. The monster Joseph Stalin was dead, but the machine of oppression he had erected was very much alive, now under the direction of a vigorous new Soviet leader, Nikita Khrushchev. Brash and full of confidence in the Soviet system, Khrushchev intended to demonstrate the superiority of communism, and was willing to draw back the Iron Curtain to prove his point. Assembled in Gorky Park that rainy June evening, more than 16,000 Russians awaited a remarkable event, the first-ever American athletic delegation to visit the Soviet Union to compete with the Soviets in a sanctioned event: a weightlifting competition.

*Steve Bonta is publisher of* The New American.

In the Soviet Union, weightlifting enjoyed a prestige similar to chess. It was something the Russians excelled at, and into which the Soviet Communist Party poured enormous resources. By the mid-1950s, the Soviets had already discovered the dubious benefits of anabolic steroids, with resulting massive gains in strength that Western athletes were unable to match. The king of Russian weightlifters in those days was Alexey Medvedev, the Soviet champion, soon to become the European and world champion. Medvedev set the tone at the event with an astounding clean and press of 330 pounds, which tied an Olympic record. One by one, the other weightlifters from both sides performed their lifts. In those days, three lifts were performed at Olympic-style competitions: the familiar snatch (in which the weight is cleared over the head in a single continuous movement), the clean and jerk, and the now-discontinued clean and press, in which the weight is cleared from the floor and then pressed directly overhead without any lower body movement. As expected, the Soviet lifters, well-coached and with flawless form, outperformed their American rivals one by one, until only one American remained.

At the very end of the competition, a stocky young man who had joined the American team at the last moment, and who had only been lifting competitively for a short time, stepped up on the stage. Standing 5'10" and lacking the muscular definition of a bodybuilder, the young man, whose name was Paul Anderson, looked overweight and clumsy. He used no performance-enhancing drugs, had no coaches, and seldom trained with professional equipment. No one in that vast audience

A comparative unknown at the time of his last-minute booking to Moscow, Anderson returned to America a conquering hero, the first Cold War triumph of American over Soviet athletes, the literal embodiment of homegrown American strength.

of weightlifting afficionados had ever heard of him. To the amusement of the judges and spectators, he requested that 402 pounds be loaded on the bar for his very first lift, the clean and press. This was more than 20 pounds more than the official world record for that lift, and 70 pounds more than Medvedev's record-tying lift earlier in the evening.

Paul stepped forward to perform the lift without even warming up. With what appeared to be minimal effort, he seized the massive weight, cleaned it to his chest, and pressed it overhead, dramatically setting a new world record without breaking a sweat. The first reaction of the crowd was stunned silence, followed by wild applause. Anderson followed with equally impressive performances in the other two lifts, and ended up winning the competition by an extraordinary margin, outlifting Medvedev by a total of 143 pounds. The Russians were graceful, even effusive in defeat, calling Anderson "Mr. America" and dubbing him in Russian *chudo prirody*, "the wonder of nature." A comparative unknown at the time of his last-minute booking to Moscow, Anderson returned to America a conquering hero, the first Cold War triumph of American over Soviet athletes, the literal embodiment of homegrown American strength.

AP Photo

## Humble Beginnings

Now widely recognized as the strongest man who ever lived, Paul Anderson came from humble beginnings. He was born in 1932 in the depths of the Great Depression, in Toccoa, a small town in northeastern Georgia, and his early childhood gave little hint of what he was to become. Anderson's father, Robert, was forced by economic conditions to seek work wherever he could, with the Anderson family moving at various times to Tennessee and South Carolina. When Paul was in the first grade, he was stricken by a very serious kidney disease then known as Bright's disease (now called chronic nephritis), for which doctors prescribed a very strict, protein-free diet and avoidance of sunlight. After Paul failed to show improvement, his mother, Ethel, decided to defy the doctors' orders and began feeding Paul a protein-rich diet and encouraging him to play outside. His health improved dramatically. Before long, his friends began noticing his unusual strength and nicknamed him "Atlas."

In high school, Paul joined the football team and began experimenting with weightlifting, using homemade weights made of steel bars, concrete, metal wheels, and anything else his father could help him devise. Because weightlifting was then believed to be a hindrance to athletic performance, Paul got no encouragement from his football coach and received absolutely no professional guidance. His size and strength increased dramatically, however, and Paul became good enough on the gridiron to earn a football scholarship at Furman University.

Paul, the backwoods Georgia boy, was not happy at Furman, but he was introduced for the first time to a modern weight room and to professional barbells and other equipment.

At the end of his first year in college, in 1952, Paul returned home, which by this time was Elizabethton in northeastern Tennessee, where he decided to dedicate all his energy to becoming a strongman. By this time, although he himself was unaware of it, Paul was already lifting record amounts of weight,

AP Photo

despite wearing no belt, knee wraps, or even shoes when using his homemade weights, and without any trainer or modern nutritional supplements or performance-enhancing substances. In addition to his raw physical power, Anderson was extraordinarily fast and athletic for a man of his size. His wife, Glenda, told *The New American* that she was as impressed with his ability to jump flat-footed from the floor to a tabletop as she was with his strength!

In Tennessee, news of Paul's extraordinary strength soon reached the ears of celebrated local strongman Bob Peoples in nearby Johnson City. Peoples was a pioneer in what came to be called powerlifting, a style of weightlifting that emphasized raw power over technique, and featured the bench press, the squat, and the deadlift, none of which were Olympic lifts. Peoples had set a world record in the deadlift of 725 pounds in 1949, despite weighing only 181 pounds. As a veteran of national competitions, Peoples was curious about the young man with elephantine strength who was the talk of northeastern Tennessee. One day, Paul came to visit the famous weightlifter, and Peoples took him downstairs to his basement weight room (which Paul later referred to as "the dungeon") to see what the young man could do. To Peoples' astonishment, Paul, wearing no lifting equipment and without even warming up, threw 550 pounds on the bar and squatted it twice with ease. The world squat record at the time, which had been standing for 30 years, was 575 pounds! This hulking 19-year-old young man with imposing 20-inch arms and a 50-inch chest, who weighed 275 pounds at just 5'10" in height, had already demonstrated world-class strength without ever being exposed to professional training, equipment, or diet. "I knew," Peoples recalled later, "that he could break all the records if he wanted to." Shortly thereafter, Peoples arranged for Paul to do a weightlifting exhibition in Johnson City at the opening of a new service station, where Anderson unofficially shattered the squat record by lifting more than 700 pounds.

With Peoples' encouragement, Paul entered his first-ever weightlifting tournament in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, the Mr. World competition in September 1952. Paul broke a world record, but was not recognized officially because he had shown up unannounced. He was only allowed to participate at all because he had driven such a great distance.

Soon thereafter, Paul participated in his first official contest at the All-Dixie Meet in Chattanooga, where he promptly set a new world record in the squat with a 650-pound lift — which was later revealed to actually be 660.5 pounds! He also performed each of the three Olympic lifts, and despite his crude, uncoached style, set new Southern records for all of them.

By 1953, Paul was squatting more than 760 pounds, almost 100 pounds more than anyone else alive, and had set a new national record in the clean and press with 352 pounds. In October of that year, he competed internationally for the first time, in Montreal, Canada, where he took first place and set a new Canadian open record with an astounding 402-pound clean and jerk. A month later, at York, Pennsylvania, he set a new world-record total of 1,065 pounds for the three Olympic lifts.

By this time, Anderson's squat had surpassed 820 pounds (more than 200 pounds more than Canadian world champion Doug Hepburn), and his body weight was well over 300 pounds.

The following year saw various injuries and health setbacks, including a broken wrist in a weightlifting mishap and broken ribs in a car accident. It wasn't until early 1955 that Anderson was able to return to competitive lifting, scoring history's first 1,100-pound total poundage for the three Olympic lifts at a competition in Washington, D.C., in February. Two months after that, in North Carolina, he performed the world's first official 400-pound press, lifting 402 pounds with relative ease, and again achieving more than 1,100 pounds for three lifts. In June, at a competition in Cleveland, he set yet another world record with a 436-pound clean and jerk.

The Cleveland performance earned Anderson a last-minute place on the American weightlifting delegation that had been invited to the Soviet Union. Prior to the trip, Paul Anderson was already widely acknowledged by the American weightlifting community to be the world's strongest human being, but after his spectacular performance in Moscow, he became a household name. He was greeted with a rapturous reception in his hometown of Toccoa, Georgia, and even received an invitation to the White House to meet with then-Vice President Richard Nixon.

Anderson was made a goodwill ambassador, and began travelling abroad to promote American values in weightlift-

Courtesy of Paul Anderson Youth Home

ing competitions and exhibitions, continuing to set new records along the way. In Munich he set yet another record for the press, 409 pounds, while in Baghdad, he set a new clean and jerk record of 457.5 pounds. Back in the States, he continued setting new records, competing as an amateur with his sights set on the ultimate prize: the 1956 Olympic games in Melbourne, Australia. With his seemingly effortless prowess in both Olympic lifts and powerlifting, it was apparent to everyone familiar with the sport that Anderson was a shoo-in to win the super heavyweight gold medal. Anderson himself, brimming with confidence, considered Olympic gold a foregone conclusion when he boarded the plane for Melbourne, having sailed almost effortlessly through the Olympic tryouts. The Russians, certain that Anderson would win, refused to allow their own champion, Medvedev, to compete.

## Disaster, Then Triumph

But disaster struck upon Paul's arrival in Australia. He became deathly ill from a mysterious ear infection, running a life-threatening fever of 104 degrees and losing 40 pounds of bodyweight from his mighty frame. Suddenly Anderson was unable to lift the massive weights that, only days before, he had hefted almost effortlessly. For the first time in his meteoric career, his aura of invincibility was punctured.

Anderson managed to get his fever down by consuming large quantities of aspirin, but he could not regain his full size and strength in time for the competition. Moreover, the ear infection had affected his balance, making it difficult for him to stand, let alone lift weights above his head.

Determined to accomplish his dream, the ailing Anderson competed anyway — only to find himself in a nose-to-nose competition with an Argentine strongman, the imposing Humberto Selvetti. In his severely weakened condition, Anderson had managed "only" 369.5 pounds in the press and 319.5 pounds in the snatch. Going into the final lift, for which he would have three tries, Anderson was told that he would have to clean and jerk at least 413.25 pounds to win the meet. Under normal conditions, this was a routine amount of weight for Anderson, but not now. His first two tries were embarrassing failures, and with but one attempt remaining, it appeared that the Argentine would upset the "Dixie Derrick."

Paul Anderson, always confident in himself when it came to the thing he did better than anyone else on the planet, was near despair. Over the preceding days and weeks, as he fought his illness, he had tried praying for divine aid, but, he admitted later, "my heart had grown cold from years of ignoring God."

During the three-minute rest before Anderson made his final attempt, he did some serious soul searching. "I felt as if God was reminding me of everything He had ever done for me," he recalled later. "He had made me who and what I was…. My successes were because he had extended my life when, as a child, Bright's disease threatened my very existence…. In spite of His innumerable blessings, my response, up until that time, was to ignore Him."

Stepping out onto the platform for his final attempt, Anderson managed to clean the bar to his chest, but immediately knew he did not have the strength to complete the lift. What happened next must be reckoned one of the greatest miracles in sports history. In a last-ditch effort, Anderson uttered a silent prayer, promising the Lord that, win or lose, he would dedicate the rest of his life to Him. As Anderson recounted the event, he said in effect, "You have given me everything, but up until now I have given you nothing. I'm not trying to make a deal, God, but from here on out, I'm making a real commitment. I will to you my life."

Immediately he felt a surge of his old strength, and, to the amazement of all assembled, shoved the winning poundage heavenward, tying the Argentine's total and, ironically, winning the tiebreaker by virtue of weighing 12 pounds less!

## Keeping the Promise

The Paul Anderson who stepped off the platform that night in Melbourne was a changed man. He was now an Olympic gold medalist, with his dramatic come-from-behind win marking the last time an American heavyweight has won an Olympic gold medal in weightlifting. But far more importantly, Paul Anderson the newly minted Christian was determined to keep the promise he had made to God with 413 pounds resting on his chest:

> I had lifted far more in the past, and would lift even more in the future.

> The poundage was not important. Even the gold medal was not the real prize. A far greater miracle had occurred. What I really won was not an Olympic championship measured by the poundage of man but the strength of God's Holy Spirit. I had finally learned that His strength would not be diluted by the diseases of my vulnerable flesh.

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Returning triumphantly to Georgia, Paul was starting to nurture a new dream. He wanted to establish a home for young men struggling with criminal tendencies, where they could be given a Christian education and proper discipline. But in order to raise money for his new charitable cause, he would have to give up his amateur athlete status, so that he could use his God-given strength to earn more money. That would mean, by the rules of the day, that Paul Anderson would never again be eligible to compete at the Olympics. But, determined to serve Christ, Anderson gladly made the sacrifice. By that time, he had already set 18 national and nine world records in weightlifting, besides winning an Olympic gold medal, and had nothing left to prove as an amateur.

He began earning money performing novelty lifts and other publicity stunts that showcased his unique strength, such as driving nails into wood with his bare hand, backlifting large groups of people standing on a platform, and, in a popular act in Las Vegas, squatting two large steel safes filled with silver dollars suspended from a bar, which weighed more than 1,000 pounds. The year after the Olympics, 1957, was a busy one for Anderson, traveling across the country competing and performing, including appearing on television programs such as the *Ed Sullivan Show*. But his most noteworthy achievement of the year came on June 12 in Toccoa. For many years, the record for the heaviest weight ever raised by a human being had been held by 19th-century Canadian strongman Louis Cyr, who claimed to have backlifted 4,337 pounds. Anderson had built a platform and trestles for backlifting in his backyard, and had already managed to lift prodigious amounts of weight. The backlift is performed by bending over in a slight squat, palms pressed into lower thighs for extra thrusting power, and lifting the trestles atop the upper back. Unlike other lifts, which have various form requirements, a successful backlift merely requires that the weight be lifted off the ground, even if only by a few inches. On that June day, in 95-degree heat, with witnesses assembled, Anderson prepared a weight of 6,270 pounds — more than three tons, and almost a ton heavier than Cyr's achievement — and lifted it off the ground. That epic feat remains the heaviest weight ever lifted by a human being to this day, and will likely never be equaled.

In 1959, the world's strongest man married fellow Christian Glenda Garland, who not only shared his values, but also supported his dream of starting a Christian youth home for disadvantaged young men. Two years later, Anderson embarked on an epic bike ride from Vidalia, Georgia, to Omaha, Nebraska (where Father Edward Flanagan's Boys Town is located), to publicize and raise funds for his youth home. During that journey, he met S. Truett Cathy, founder of the Chick-fil-A restaurant chain and, like Paul, a devout Christian. Cathy was so impressed with Anderson and his dream that he became his first major donor — although it was Paul's numerous paid speaking engagements and public displays of strength that furnished most of the seed money. The Paul Anderson Youth Home (PAYH) was founded later that same year. It operated at first out of a hotel in Vidalia, but was able to move into a permanent location, a house on McIntosh Street, also in Vidalia, the following year, where it remains to this day.

In a generous interview granted to *The New American*, Paul's widow, Glenda, described in detail the challenges of their

In a last-ditch effort, Anderson uttered a silent prayer, promising the Lord that, win or lose, he would dedicate the rest of his life to Him.

enterprise — but also the Lord's guiding hand in supporting their work. The Paul Anderson Youth Home, Glenda said, accepts young men between the ages of 16 and 21, with a maximum of 16 residents at any time in order to maintain a family-like environment. The home also features a fully accredited school, begun in 1977, where the young men are offered a traditional, well-rounded education in a Christian setting. It has never received any government funding, Glenda explained, because with any such funding would come controls on what curriculum could be taught, limiting their ability to teach from a Christian perspective. Students may receive vocational training in a wide range of disciplines, and are also given practical life-skills training in areas such as creating resumés, managing a household budget, home and automobile maintenance, proper etiquette, and developing a good work ethic, with the goal of teaching them how to be Christian gentlemen and men in the truest sense of the word. A very large proportion of their graduates end up with successful careers and stable Christian family lives. Glenda told *The New American* that their very first student recently came to visit to thank her for the wonderful impact Paul Anderson's home had had on his life. He was terminally ill, but, in spite of navigating some difficult challenges, was a committed Christian forever grateful for the way that PAYH had shaped his entire life.

A man of extraordinary energy and work ethic, Paul Anderson continued touring, speaking, preaching, and performing his signature feats of strength, averaging some 500 speeches per year for many years. As he summed up his vision at one such event:

> I feel that my calling is to speak to young people, especially to demonstrate to them that it's not a sissy thing to be a Christian, to demonstrate to them that it's not old-fashioned to be a patriot, to embrace the basic principles of our land. I am a fortunate person…. Yes, it's a thrilling thing to be an Olympic champion, to be called the strongest man in the world, but the greatest thrill in my life is being a Christian…. I am called the strongest man in the world, but I could not get through one day without Jesus Christ.

In addition to his own ministry, Anderson was a strong supporter of the Fellowship of Christian Athletes, and received the FCA's prestigious Branch Rickey Memorial Award in 1975.

And Paul Anderson was a fervent patriot. As he explained it:

> Being a patriot and speaking on patriotism a great deal, and me a Christian, sometimes I am asked, "Do the two things conflict?", being patriotic to your country and loyal to God, because it's the God of the whole world. And of course, my feeling on this, and my answer to this is the fact that we've got to be loyal. You've got to be loyal to something…. I love my country, the United States of America, and loving America, I can love other countries. If I ever looked down on my country, and said that I was, like some would say today ... a citizen of the world, well, you're not really loyal to anything.

## Always Steadfast

Paul continued to work, sacrifice, and garner awards, until, as he had always known it eventually would, his long-latent kidney disease once again made its presence felt. In 1981, it was clear that Bright's disease was back, and would be with him for the rest of his life. Before long, he had suffered full renal failure, requiring dialysis. In 1983, Anderson received a new lease on life when his sister Dorothy donated a kidney.

By 1985, Anderson was no longer able to travel as he once had, yet he continued as committed to his life's work as ever. Those who knew him during those difficult, declining years marveled at his faith, his positivity, and his inner strength, in spite of having to endure a disease that stripped him of his marvelous strength and even his mobility at a comparatively young age. Through all of the physical trials of the last decade of his life, Paul's faith never wavered, nor was his energy in running his youth home diminished. He continued to receive accolades for his accomplishments, including, in 1992, recognition as the "Strongest Man of the Century" at the USA Power and Strength Symposium.

On August 15, 1994, Paul Anderson — strongman, patriot, philanthropist, and Christian — passed away at the age of 61. "He was simply a hero," Glenda recalled fondly. And as one admirer put it, "He is the strongest man in the world, and he lifts weights, too." ■

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***"This is a republic, not a democracy — Let's keep it that way!"***

# Trump Must Appoint a Pro-2A Attorney General

*by D. Michael DeRidder*

At the start of President Donald Trump's second term, law-abiding firearm owners had every reason to expect swift restoration of their God-given, constitutionally protected right to keep and bear arms. During the 2024 presidential campaign, Trump campaigned explicitly on ending former President Joe Biden's firearm restrictions.

Trump promised that "no one will lay a finger on your firearms" if he were reelected, and that "every single Biden attack on gun owners and manufacturers will be terminated on my very first week back in office, perhaps my first day."

Former Attorney General Pam Bondi failed miserably to deliver on these promises, and actively worked to maintain the Biden-era restrictions. Under Bondi, the Department of Justice (DOJ) continued to enforce two of the most egregious rules, the pistol-brace ban and a "universal background check" rule on private sales.

### The Pistol-brace Ban

The Biden-era pistol-brace ban perfectly illustrates Bondi's betrayal. A federal court vacated the Biden administration's rule reclassifying millions of braced pistols as short-barreled rifles under the National Firearms Act. In June 2026, Bondi's DOJ told the court in *Texas et al. v. ATF* that the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) would continue enforcing National Firearms Act (NFA) and Gun Control Act restrictions against pistol-brace-equipped firearms. The DOJ's defiance ignores both a court order and Trump's campaign promises.

Effective January 1, 2026, the One Big Beautiful Bill Act (H.R. 1) reduced the $200 NFA tax on short-barreled firearms and suppressors to $0. Despite this, the ATF spent months threatening citizens with felony charges unless they submitted a Form 1 "Application to Make and Register a Firearm." On April 29, acting Attorney General Todd Blanche announced that the DOJ would finally rescind the pistol-brace restriction and other Biden-era regulations.

### "Engaged in the Business"

Trump also pledged to eliminate the Biden ATF's "engaged in the business" rule, which was a thinly veiled push for universal background checks on private firearm transfers. However, the DOJ that was supposed to dismantle Biden's gun-control regime instead fought in court to maintain the rule, ensuring continued uncertainty and potential criminal liability for firearm owners performing lawful private transfers.

In April, however, the DOJ relented and asked the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 5th Circuit to dismiss its appeal of a preliminary injunction Gun Owners of America (GOA) obtained against the rule in a lower court. Erich Pratt, senior vice president of GOA, stated:

> This move by DOJ is a massive step towards fulfilling President Trump's campaign promise to gun owners to end this Biden rule. Biden's criminalization of private gun sales was a naked attempt to infringe on the Second Amendment rights of millions of gun owners. GOA and [the Gun Owners Foundation] once gain have triumphed over ATF overreach.

Whatever the reason for Trump's April 2 decision to fire Bondi, it is a tentative victory for firearm owners. But the fight is not over. Americans must demand a replacement AG who will adhere to the Constitution and enforce the Second Amendment's "shall not be infringed" as non-negotiable — not as a suggestion that can be ignored by bureaucrats.

### Who's Next?

The next attorney general must be a proven defender of the Constitution, and someone who will defend the God-given right of the people to keep and bear arms.

Anything less is a betrayal of the voters who sent Trump back to Washington to dismantle the administrative state's infringements on our God-given, constitutionally protected rights. State legislators continue to work to restore access to bearable arms and firearm rights at the state level, and officials within Trump's second administration must follow suit. The Second Amendment is not a second-class right, and the attorney general should serve as its chief defender in the executive branch.

One of Bondi's fundamental failures was her unwillingness to recognize that the right to keep and bear arms is not a privilege granted by government, but a God-given, unalienable right affirmed by the Declaration of Independence and protected by the Second Amendment. When executive-branch officials refuse to rescind unconstitutional policy, they are violating the oath they swore to support and defend the Constitution.

Trump has taken the first step by removing Bondi. He must now appoint a truly pro-Second Amendment attorney general — someone who understands that rights come from God, not government, and who will boldly defend them. ■

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# WOLVERTON'S WARNING

*NO LIES GO UNCHALLENGED. NO TYRANT GOES UNNAMED.*

Joe Wolverton II, J.D. is The John Birch Society's constitutional law scholar

## CONGRESS BLESSES THE SURVEILLANCE STATE — AGAIN

***by Joe Wolverton II, J.D.***

The Fourth Amendment was not written in pencil. It was not a suggestion. It was not a polite request submitted to the federal government, awaiting approval from bureaucrats, judges, spooks, or congressional errand boys of the intelligence apparatus.

It is a command: Get a warrant.

Yet on April 30, Congress once again bent the knee before the surveillance state, with the Senate voting unanimously — after the House voted 261-111 — to extend by 45 days Section 702 of the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act, the infamous warrantless spying power that allows federal intelligence agencies to collect communications supposedly aimed at foreigners overseas while also vacuuming up the emails, texts, calls, and digital lives of Americans "incidentally."

Do not be fooled by the language. "Incidental collection" is Washington-speak for "we got your data without a warrant, but trust us, citizen, it was an accident."

This is how liberty dies in the modern age — not always with tanks in the streets, but with acronyms, secret courts, classified briefings, and solemn-faced congressmen telling us that surrendering the Bill of Rights is necessary to "keep us safe."

Safe from whom? From foreign terrorists? From drug cartels? From cybercriminals? These are the usual scarecrows dragged out whenever the Deep State wants another key to another door in the American household. But the real question is never asked: Who will keep us safe from the federal government?

The men who framed the Constitution had an answer. It was not "trust the FBI." It was not "trust the NSA." It was not "trust secret courts." It was not "trust congressional oversight," that ancient Washington fairy tale told to children and cable-news viewers.

Their answer was written plainly: No unreasonable searches and seizures; no warrants without probable cause; no general warrants; no rummaging through the people's papers and effects because some official claims necessity.

The defenders of Section 702 insist that reforms have fixed the problem. We have heard that song before. Every abuse is "fixed" until the next batch of violations comes to light. Every agency promises restraint, and every Congress pretends to believe it.

But Americans have already learned what this machinery can do. Critics from across the political spectrum have warned that Section 702 enables "backdoor searches" of Americans' communications — searches performed after the government has already collected the data without a warrant. Civil-liberties groups have continued to warn that the law permits the government to sidestep constitutional protections and spy on Americans through the back door.

And still Congress extends it. Not reforms it; not repeals it; not binds it down with the chains of the Constitution. *Extends it*. That tells us everything.

The issue is not foreign intelligence. The issue is whether Americans remain a free people or become managed subjects in a national-security panopticon. The issue is whether the Fourth Amendment still means what it says, or whether it has been quietly repealed by bipartisan cowardice.

This is not a Left-versus-Right question. The surveillance state wears both jerseys. It speaks Republican when Republicans are in power and Democratic when Democrats are in power. It changes its slogans, not its appetite. It always wants more data, more secrecy, more immunity, more money, more time. And Congress gives it all.

A 45-day extension may sound temporary. Do not believe it. In Washington, temporary tyranny is just permanent tyranny waiting for another extension. They will be back in June, waving the same bloody shirt, issuing the same warnings, demanding the same submission.

If the government wants to inspect the communications of an American citizen, let it go before a real court, show probable cause, name the person, name the place, describe the thing to be searched, and obey the supreme law of the land. Anything less is not national security. It is despotism with a database. ■

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# Wrath, Patience, and Moral Clarity in the Post-Christian West

## AT A GLANCE

- Wrath is one of the defining vices of our time.
- It is the most violent and extreme of the Seven Deadly Sins.
- Wrath has taken over political discourse.
- God will invoke His wrath.

*Dr. Duke Pesta is executive director at FreedomProject Academy, a classical school that offers online classes in real time for kindergarten through high school. He has also taught at seven universities over the last 30 years.*

The New American *magazine presents this bimonthly feature, "Culture Corner," offering a deep focus on contemporary cultural issues viewed through the prism of history, art, literature, music, and theology. The goal is to recover and reinvigorate the moral and virtuous purposes of the humanities, long forgotten and compromised by materialist pedagogues and Marxist socialist ideologues in our schools and universities. In the famous description by the Roman poet Horace in* Ars Poetica *(19 B.C.), the ultimate ideal of humanistic learning is* prodesse et delectare *(to instruct and to delight). Down through the ages of Western culture, the purpose of humane letters has been the triumph of Truth and Beauty: truth to instruct us in morality and knowledge, and beauty to delight us with joy and gratitude. The inaugural Culture Corner series features a seven-article reflection on virtue and vice, from Classical and Christian sources going back to the Bible, to the ancient Greeks and Romans, and through the Middle Ages to our own world. This is article three of seven; the first appeared in our December 2025 issue.*

**by Dr. Duke Pesta**

Wrath. The modern world has surrendered to this vice, largely because atheism, materialism, and technology have stripped us of our ability to be patient. Atheism reduces the authority of morality from the realm of the universal to the sphere of the temporal, where time, not God, is ultimately in control. If all we have is "time in nature" — instead of the timeless climes of heaven — then patience is nothing more than distraction and death. Materialism reorients the meaning of life to the imperatives of random biology and the unconscious flotsam and jetsam of clashing atoms. Without purpose and agency, patience is the enemy of instinct and genetics, an evolutionary blip that pulls us out of the immediate moment, where all too often the struggle for survival is decided. To wait patiently is to be surpassed. And technology replaces human intelligence and critical thinking with algorithms and the bloodless ether of virtual reality. The more we depend on devices "that do our thinking for us," the more we demand immediate

Of all the Seven Deadly Sins, Wrath is the most visibly violent and objectively extreme, both internally and externally. The wrack and ruin that constitutes Wrath wrecks both body and soul, while laying waste to human life and property in its wake.

cyber gratification. Instead of patiently pursuing the laborious cultivation of understanding and knowledge that alone breeds virtue, we offload learning to machines that dispense in mere seconds dubious info-pellets. Preprogrammed "answers" require but one click; wisdom is built on the foundation of patience. As Shakespeare put it, "though patience be a tired mare, yet she will plod."

Of course, the virtuous antidote to the sin of Wrath is Patience, one of most invoked and admired virtues across world religions and within Western morality. And it is also among the hardest virtues to cultivate and practice. Patience is fulsome, fertile, and fecund; it allows temperance to bloom and peace to flourish; it is the virtue that most leads to creation, and it is a primary attribute of God's potency. The Bible proclaims His patience across scripture, characterizing the Lord as "merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth" (Exodus 34:6). The archaic translation "longsuffering" captures the idea that the practice of patience is often an exercise in suffering, a sacrifice of action in the now for a future blessing that may never come. It is a willing surrender of agency in the hope and faith that forbearance will engender recognition and atonement. This is why God is described as "slow to anger," and Saint Augustine is correct in observing that "patience is the companion of wisdom."

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On the other hand, one of the unique paradoxes about the sin of Wrath is how it emerges out of sheer impotence and sterility. The aggression and madness of wrath — convulsive and explosive — is always triggered by something lacking, something broken or inadequate inside of us that lashes out in bilious rage. This impotence-driven wrath is found in almost every aspect of modern Western culture, from the war on Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) to the killing of Charlie Kirk, and from the torching of Tesla showcases to the (entirely predictable) killing sprees of "trans" mass-murderers. A 30-second wait while the "loading icon" spins — as your computer is trying to process — is enough to cause paroxysms of rage in impatient users. (By the way, the formal name of that loading icon is a "throbber," an apt onomatopoeia for an electronic process that elevates the blood pressure and sets the heart pounding.) And a 10-minute stoppage of traffic on the highway has hair-trigger drivers honking and shouting invectives at their windshields.

Of all the Seven Deadly Sins, Wrath is the most visibly violent and objectively extreme, both internally and externally. The wrack and ruin that constitutes Wrath wrecks both body and soul, while laying waste to human life and property

in its wake. The French theologian and diplomat Peter of Blois (1130-1211) is among the earliest to formally record the long-standing proverb: "He who cuts off his nose takes poor revenge for a shame inflicted on him." The modern version of this adage — "cutting off your nose to spite your face" — underscores the fact that the first victims of the Deadly Sins are the sinners themselves. But where the other Deadly Sins are cunning and guileful, more difficult to recognize and easier to conceal, wrath is always blunt, aggressive, and nearly impossible to disguise. Even Gluttony — which may be seemingly noticeable in a person's physique — comes in many forms and behaviors that cannot be visualized, while corpulence itself may be caused by a spate of issues unrelated to excess consumption. And Wrath, when stifled or sublimated, eventually morphs into sister sins such as Envy, Greed, or Lust.

RapidEye/Getty Images

Every day in the United States, Wrath takes center place in our cultural and political lives, drowning out pleas for patience and tolerance. Indeed, very often those screeching the loudest about tolerance and patience are those who have the least trace of these virtues themselves. Since the reelection of Trump, the Left has doubled down on Wrath as a cynical political strategy and a fascist tool of revolution. Like the socialists, communists, and anarchists before them, they have dipped their warped buckets deep into the well of Marxist dialectic and drawn nothing but blood and gall. Social media is hagridden by the aptly named AWFLs (Affluent, White, Female Liberals), harpies who scream their impotent imprecations to the heavens while basking in the soft glow of their electronic selfie-cauldrons. Weaned on the witch's brew of liberal-arts degrees and gender-studies classes, they film their murderous manifestos in their cars or amid the familiar grimalkins that haunt their bedrooms, howling like banshees against "cis-gendered" white males, toxic MAGA supporters, and so-called Christian nationalists.

It is their very impotence and wrath that makes such AWFLs so desperate and self-defeating. How else can we make sense of Renee Good's "suicide by cop"? Egged on by her lesbian activist "wife," she intentionally maneuvered her automobile into the midst of an ongoing ICE operation. Whatever your opinion about internal border-control policies in our cities, weaponizing a car to intervene in such a charged situation is a suicide run. As we know from daily experience, Wrath is exponentially more reckless when it is magnified through a screen — whether a computer, a phone, or a windshield. Road rage is a close and venomous cousin of "keyboard warriorism," where people post angry and abusive comments on social media, things that they would never dream of saying to someone's face. Anonymity — real or perceived — also ratchets up the destructive capability of Wrath in exaggerated ways.

These types of Wrath — politicized, virulent, and unchecked on the vast and arid networks of the internet — transform every disagreement, disappointment, or debate into an Elizabethan revenge tragedy. The obsession for vengeance comes to override justice, and the wrathful avenger ends up more culpable and compromised than the villain he haunts. As Shakespeare's Shylock explains in *The Merchant of Venice*:

> If a Jew wrong a Christian, what is his humility?
> Revenge.
> If a Christian wrong a Jew, what should his sufferance be by Christian example?
> Why, revenge.
> The villainy you teach me, I will execute, and it shall go hard but I will better the instruction.

On social media, leftist wrath demands far more than a pound of flesh: They clamor for guillotines, nooses, and genocides aimed against conservatives, Republicans, and Christians for the grand crime of voting against *their* interests.

As bad as the false fruits of Wrath are — ultimately consummated in blood and violence — the contemplative and fantasy aspects of unchecked anger torment and fuel the wrathful with a wicked and corrosive anticipation for vengeance. The spiritual self-harm of Wrath comes well before the violent payoff. As demonstrated in their TikTok videos, the most jarring aspect of angry left-wingers is how they simmer and marinate in their wrathful hate. As on a dopamine rush, their pupils dilate. They tremble and stutter, foam and spittle gathering in the corners of their mouths. As critics of this type of wrath porn point out, it's always their eyes that give them away.

Recently, Susan Rice, former national

security advisor and U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, offered what seems very much like a Stalinist threat against companies and private entities. She warned that when Democrats retake power, they will never forgive "all the people you fired, all the policies and principles you've violated, all … the laws you've skirted. I think they've got another thing coming." She condemned media, universities, and legal firms for "bowing" before President Donald Trump, calling for an "accountability agenda" that sounds very much like a potential purge of political adversaries. In *King Lear*, Shakespeare captures this odd amalgam of searing wrath and spluttering impotence. Unable to punish his ungrateful daughters — having turned over to them his crown, his titles, and his kingdom — Lear is reduced to performative wrath, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing:

> I will have such revenges on you both,
> That all the world shall — I will do such things, —
> What they are, yet I know not: but they shall be
> The terrors of the earth.

Under the foment of violent protests and lawless riots, progressive minions assault agents of the law and vandalize federal edifices with bricks, chunks of ripped up concrete, and even arson.

History and literature alike chronicle similar scenes of intemperate mayhem, where the forces of evil resort to uprooting critical infrastructure in the name of anarchy and nihilism. In Book VI of Milton's *Paradise Lost* (1667), God's loyal angels defend the throne of heaven against Lucifer and his apostate angels — forever hence known as demons — in a battle consumed by Wrath. As the faithful angels begin to exert their will over the demonic horde, the desperate rebels resort to tearing up the topography of heaven itself, using devilish cannons to hurl hills, rocks, and trees at the defenders. The confused and anarchic wrath of the demons is countered by the Wrath of God — the critical moment when Divine Patience gives way to sublime Justice — which emboldens the loyal angels and terrifies the demons. The angels meet their foes on their own terms:

> Their Arms away they threw, and to the Hills
> … Light as the Lightning glimpse they ran, they flew,
> From their foundations loosening to and fro
> They plucked the seated Hills with all their load,
> Rocks, Waters, Woods, and by the shaggy tops
> Up lifting bore them in their hands: Amaze,
> Be sure, and terror seized the rebel Host,
> When coming towards them so dread they saw
> The bottom of the Mountains upward turn'd …

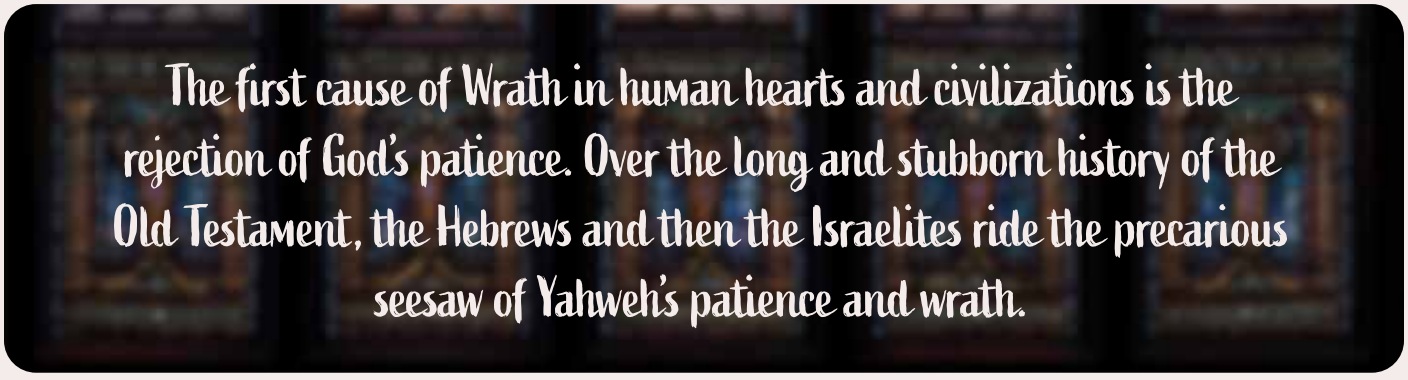
Upon viewing the Wrath of the Father thus unleashed, the Son of God entreats the Father to allow Him to enter the fray, in order to restore the celestial order and reinstate the benevolent patience that is the foundation of God's saving mercy. From the beginning — long before the Son entered the world as Jesus of Nazareth — He was the exemplar of Patience that quells Wrath.

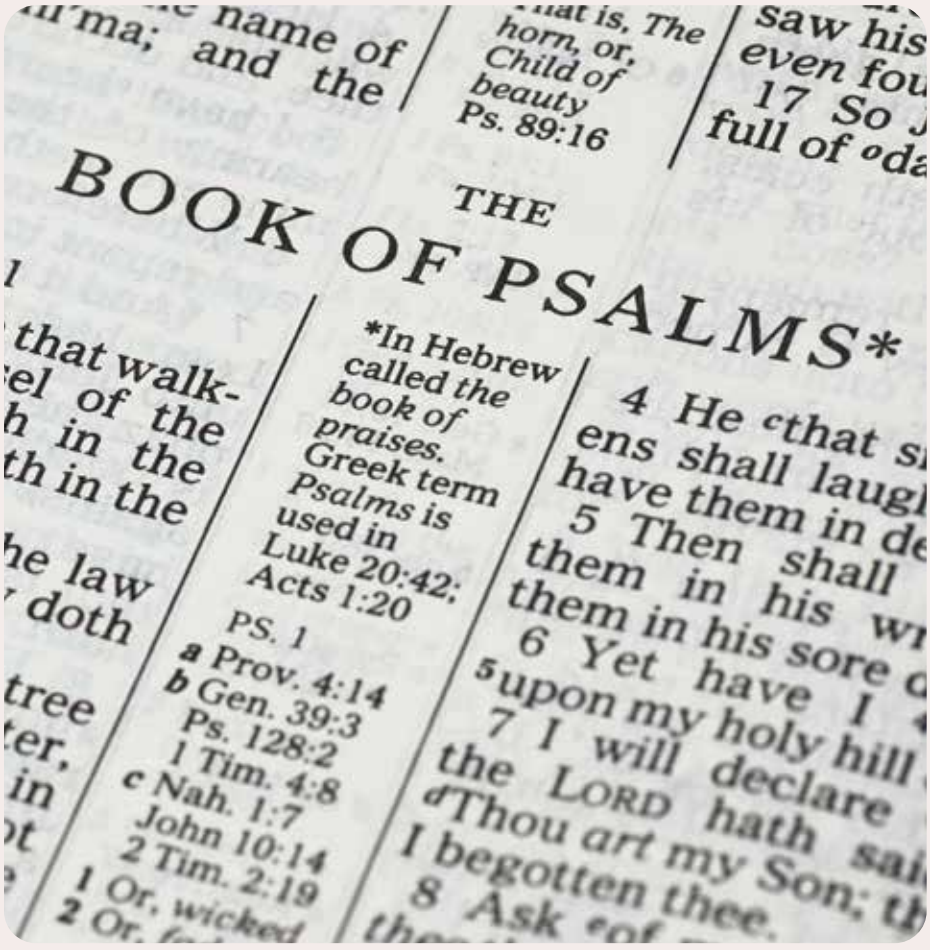
### The Patience of God's Wrath and the Wrathful Rejection of God's Patience

The first cause of Wrath in human hearts and civilizations is the rejection of God's patience. Over the long and stubborn history of the Old Testament, the Hebrews and then the Israelites ride the precarious seesaw of Yahweh's patience and wrath. God takes them literally under His wing, patiently incubating and brooding over them with much care and protection. And yet, again and again they fall away, ignoring the Lord's patience, then trying it, then straining it, and then finally losing it. As one itinerant Rabbi put it in Matthew 23:37,

> O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!

Of course, Christ's indictment applies to all of us, not just to the ancient Israelites. If the wages of sin are death, then surely the wages of testing God's patience are Wrath. Patience is part of God's unmovable nature, but when He created us in His image, we were made free and able to choose for ourselves. Wrath, evil, death, and Hell itself are alien to Him. They sprung fully formed from our own fevered brains and actions. God's gift of


The first cause of Wrath in human hearts and civilizations is the rejection of God's patience. Over the long and stubborn history of the Old Testament, the Hebrews and then the Israelites ride the precarious seesaw of Yahweh's patience and wrath.



Magdalena Kucova/AdobeStock

freedom means that we must be able to choose something besides Him. To reject God's patience (in this sense, very much akin to rejecting His mercy) is to be left with Wrath.

In Deuteronomy 9:7-8, for instance, God reminds the people about the consequences of rejecting His patience and mercy:

> Remember, and forget not, how thou provokedst the LORD thy God to wrath in the wilderness: from the day that thou didst depart out of the land of Egypt, until ye came unto this place, ye have been rebellious against the LORD.
>
> Also in Horeb ye provoked the LORD to wrath, so that the LORD was angry with you to have destroyed you.

Justice is also one of God's immovable attributes. When we repeatedly reject His patience, justice demands that He revoke the gift. To do otherwise would be unjust, an overriding of our free will.

Again, in 2 Kings 22:17, God judges Judah for worshipping false idols:

> Because they have forsaken me, and have burned incense unto other gods, that they might provoke me to anger with all the works of their hands; therefore my wrath shall be kindled against this place, and shall not be quenched.

The rejection from the people always comes first, before Patience is removed and Wrath kindled. The pronouncement that the punishment "shall not be quenched" implies that the sin has been a long-term iniquity on behalf of the people.

In Psalm 38:1-3, David laments in song that God's wrath has overwhelmed him, as he seeks mercy and restoration:

> O Lord, rebuke me not in thy wrath: neither chasten me in thy hot displeasure.
>
> For thine arrows stick fast in me, and thy hand presseth me sore.
>
> There is no soundness in my flesh because of thine anger; neither is there any rest in my bones because of my sin.

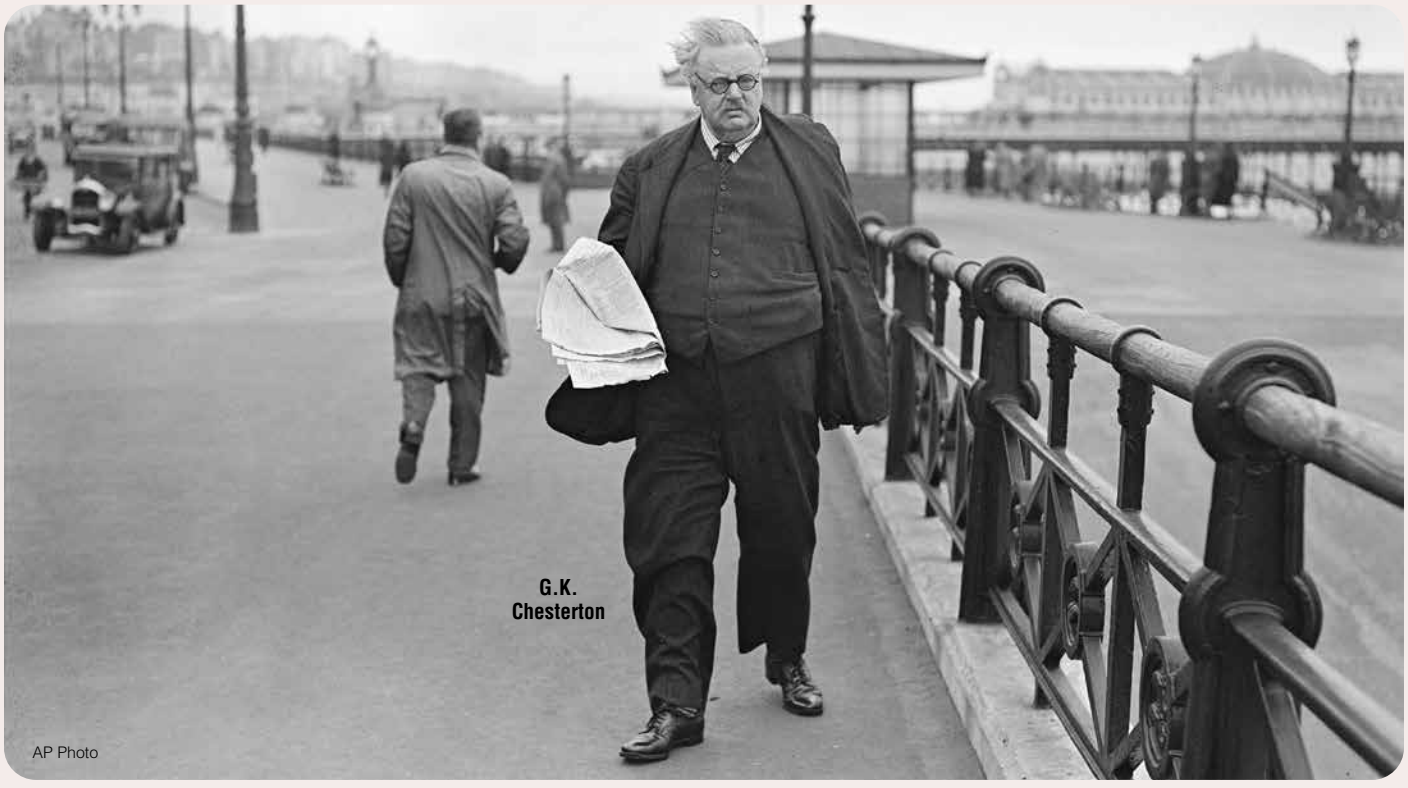
The fatal dalliance with Bathsheba that led to the death of Uriah, among other iniquities, weighed heavy on David's conscience. Such introspective and visceral contrition is the remedy that brings back God's natural patience and mercy. It is also important to stress that God's wrath can be harnessed by the persecuted and the righteous, a present help to overthrow their enemies. David often implores the Lord to come to his rescue, for dishonest men are using his public shame and atonement against him, as in Psalm 59:13, 16-17:

> Consume them in wrath, consume them, that they may not be: and let them know that God ruleth in Jacob unto the ends of the earth. Selah.
>
> … But I will sing of thy power; yea, I will sing aloud of thy mercy in the morning: for thou hast been my defense and refuge in the day of my trouble.
>
> Unto thee, O my strength, will I sing: for God is my defense, and the God of my mercy.

As part of the covenant with the people, God's wrath may be invoked on behalf of an individual or the whole community. He may chasten favorites such as David or Job or Daniel, but the attacks of others kindle His wrath. And the covenant often requires God to wreak Wrath on foreign peoples who persecute the Israelites or seek to impose false gods upon them.

We see the eschatological consequences of such covenantal relations in the Book of Revelation. At the blowing of the seventh trumpet — which signals the cessation of the establishment of God's kingdom — the Lord judges the angry and estranged nations of the world:

> And the nations were angry, and thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that thou shouldest give reward unto thy servants the


G.K. Chesterton

AP Photo

prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear thy name, small and great; and shouldest destroy them which destroy the earth.

The dead are judged, while the prophets, disciples, and saints are rewarded for their faith and suffering. At these end times, there is no patience in God for the destroyers of the world, only anger and Wrath.

The *Dies Irae* (the Day of Wrath) is a 13th-century hymn composed in Latin. The poem is attributed to either the Franciscan friar Thomas of Celano (born c. 1185) or the Italian cardinal Latino Malabranca Orsini (died 1294). Some argue that the poem is much older, dating all the way back to Pope Gregory the Great (died 604). The poem depicts the Last Judgment and is also concerned with the fate of the saved and the damned. Today, it is most known as part of the Roman Catholic Requiem Mass for the dead. In the hymn, the Apocalypse as presented in the Book of Revelation is very much a story of God's final act of earthly patience and the wrath that ensues:

Day of Wrath and doom impending!
David's word with Sibyl's blending,
Heaven and earth in ashes ending!

As in the earlier passage from the Book of Revelation, the above poem emphasizes the Wrath that will befall the "angry nations" of the world. The inclusion of David with the prophetic and pagan Sibyls of Rome is an astute allusion. The ancient Roman Empire was not only deeply involved in the "ruination of the earth," but was also condemned for its persecution of both the Jews and the early Christians. The poem moves from Wrath, to death, to imploration and entreaty, to submission, to judgment, and, finally, to mercy:

Ah! that day of tears and mourning,
From the dust of earth returning
Man for judgement must prepare him,
Spare, O God, in mercy spare him.
Lord, all-pitying, Jesus blest,
Grant them Thine eternal rest.

The poem — like the Bible — stresses that mercy wins out in the end, and it is the sacrifice of Christ, the Son of God, who once again restores God's patience and mercy to men. He is the door of the sheep, the way from the darkness of Wrath to the light of Patience.

### Reckoning With a God of Wrath and Patience: Utility and Utopia

God did not make us equally intelligent, or attentive, or math-competent. We don't have the same IQs, aptitudes, proclivities, or constitutions. Over the centuries, these naked differences have been the source of much Wrath. But God also gifted us the universal virtue of Patience. And Patience allows every single person who practices it to minimize — if not obliterate — these individual differences and inequalities. The youngest of children can be taught Patience, and the oldest of men can be reminded of its necessity. Not only is the virtue of Patience the kryptonite for Wrath, it is also the miracle that allows each of us a chance to keep in stride with genius and brilliance. A great many of the world's most accomplished people have acknowledged this simple truism.

Michelangelo insisted that "genius is eternal patience." Sir Francis Bacon said that "whoever is out of patience is out of possession of their soul," and Sir Isaac Newton confessed, "If I have done the public any service, it is due to my patient thought." Albert Einstein noted that "it's not that I'm so smart, it's just that I stay with problems longer." The Christian pastor George

**"Abdiel and Satan," from Milton's *Paradise Lost*, by Gustave Dore**

duncan1890/Getty Images

MacDonald knew "that the principal part of faith is patience," even as the Christian philosopher Søren Kierkegaard reasoned that "patience is necessary, and one cannot reap immediately where one has sown." And Helen Keller knew from painful experience that "we could never learn to be brave and patient, if there were only joy in the world."

American theologian Richard Niebuhr once wrote that "A God without wrath brought human beings without sin into a kingdom without judgment through the ministrations of a Christ without a cross." This remarkable statement takes us back to our Edenic origins and reminds us that God — through Christ the Word — initially created us free, immune from the perils of judgment, and exempt from disease and death. And all of this with no need for divine wrath or the obscenity of the cross. No wonder that our ancestors insisted so emphatically that the tree we fell under was the same tree that eventually propped Him up. Mercy and Patience were held in abeyance, and Wrath afflicted only the serpent and the demon who corrupted it. The universal moral virtues were inherent in us and the world around us. The Seven Deadly Sins were naught but seven pips waiting to germinate in that rare and exotic fruit on that one cursed tree.

Another American theologian, R.C. Sproul, once wrote that "A god who is all love, all grace, all mercy, no sovereignty, no justice, no holiness, and no wrath is an idol." This remarkable statement takes us back to the world right outside our door. In this fallen world, we realize that God cannot afford to be either a utopian or a pragmatist.

The quote from Niebuhr reminds us that utopia and free will cannot coexist in a material world, among physical bodies and biological brains. The moral of this lesson should forever relegate socialism to the ash heap of history — at least if socialists ever paid any attention to history. The quote from Sproul reminds us that in order to keep order in our woebegone corner of the universe, God must carry on in ways that are guaranteed to disappoint the pragmatist, whose need for practical application and utility rules out theology and belief altogether. The moral of this lesson is that logic alone cannot bring us to God, nor can reason account for the precise order of our random universe, from which everything supposedly burst into something-ness out of nothing at all.

By way of elucidation, Sproul also wrote that "Christ exposed himself not only to the unbridled hostility of angry men, but, more significantly, to the unmitigated wrath of God." In this quote we locate the polarity that thwarts both the romantic dreamer and the cynical skeptic. It seems utterly unnecessary to expose Christ to the insane anger of men, and unbearably cruel to submit Christ to the entirety of God's unabated wrath. Why dignify human evil at His expense? Why debase His divinity at the hands of the Father?

One answer is posited by G.K. Chesterton: "We fear men so much, because we fear God so little. One fear cures another. When man's terror scares you, turn your thoughts to the wrath of God." Christ suffered under our hands to demonstrate to *us*, emphatically, that there is nothing we can do to save ourselves. Christ's suffering slammed the door on utopian socialism early and definitively. When we abandoned God and heaven, God sent Himself and the promise of heaven to us. We murdered Him for it.

The other answer was posed by the third-century theologian Origen: "We speak, indeed, of the wrath of God. We do not, however, assert that it indicates any passion on His part, but that it is something which is assumed in order to discipline by stern means those sinners who have committed many and grievous sins." Earlier in this essay, I suggested something along this line. God is not "personally" wrathful; not overcome with such destructive passions. God's wrath is a legalistic aspect of His justice, a required and necessary reflex that responds to the enormity of human sin. His enduring patience holds back the implementation of Wrath as long as His mercy allows, but eventually we must receive that which we have chosen. Sin is death. And that's why God allowed Christ to feel the full force of His judicial wrath. He chose not to expend it on us, but turned it on Himself instead. In any event, we could not have survived it. And that is the miracle and the sacrifice that covers our sin and mitigates His wrath. Because Christ patiently bore the brunt of God's unmitigated wrath, we are able to receive grace, not justice. ■

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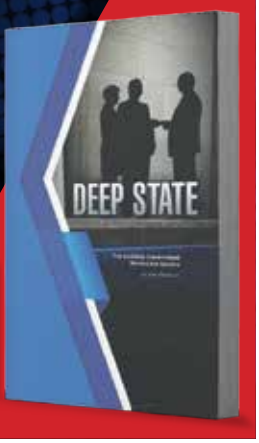


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# NONE DARE CALL IT TREASON — AND NONE DARE IGNORE IT

**by Joe Wolverton II, J.D.**

***None Dare Call It Treason*,** by John A. Stormer: Western Islands, Appleton, Wisconsin, 2025 edition, 339 pages, paperback.

There are books that describe events. There are books that interpret movements. And then there are books that detonate illusions.

*None Dare Call It Treason* belongs to the last category.

First published in 1964 and now reissued in a handsome and timely edition by Western Islands, this work by John A. Stormer stands as one of the most consequential political books of the 20th century. Its influence on the conservative movement was seismic; its indictment of the bipartisan political establishment was unsparing; and its thesis — that America's internal subversion posed a more existential threat than any foreign foe — was, at the time, dismissed by the guardians of "respectability" as paranoid exaggeration.

History has rendered a different verdict.

Stormer's book was written at the height of the Cold War, when the menace of international communism was undeniable yet its domestic facilitators were treated as figments of overheated imaginations. The author catalogued, with names, dates, votes, and verifiable citations, the pattern of concessions, compromises, and calculated retreats that characterized U.S. foreign and domestic policy from the Franklin D. Roosevelt era forward. He did not traffic in rumor. He did not rely on anonymous whispers. He relied on the *Congressional Record*, on public statements, on documented affiliations, and on the ideological commitments openly professed by policymakers and intellectuals.

For this, he was ridiculed. But ridicule is often the last refuge of those unwilling to engage facts.

The genius of *None Dare Call It Treason* lies not merely in its exposure of communist penetration of institutions, but in its larger constitutional warning. Stormer understood that the true battle was not Moscow versus Washington, but constitutional government versus concentrated power. He recognized that the erosion of American liberty was being accomplished not primarily by Red Army divisions, but by the steady centralization of authority in Washington, D.C., the abdication of congressional responsibility, and the progressive normalization of executive overreach.

In this sense, Stormer was less a partisan polemicist than a constitutional diagnostician.

He demonstrated that policies advancing collectivism — whether in agriculture, labor, education, or foreign aid — did not arise in a vacuum. They were the domestic expression of a philosophy fundamentally at odds with the principles of limited government enshrined in the Constitution. The Framers designed a federal system of enumerated powers, jealously guarded by separation of powers and checked by federalism. Stormer showed how both parties — through cowardice, ambition, or ideological sympathy — participated in dismantling those safeguards.

That diagnosis resonates today with unnerving clarity.

The reissue of this book is not an exercise in nostalgia. It is an act of civic urgency.

Consider the present condition of our Republic. The administrative state now governs vast swaths of American life through unelected bureaucracies issuing regulations with the force of law. International entanglements continue to erode national sovereignty. Trade agreements, multilateral institutions, and executive agreements often circumvent the clear constitutional processes for making treaties. Congress, increasingly timid, delegates its legislative authority while posturing for cameras. Meanwhile, public discourse is shaped by media institutions that function less as watchdogs of power and more as its amplifiers.

Stormer would not be surprised.

Indeed, much of what he documented has matured into the permanent architecture of governance. The cultural Marxism once confined to university departments now animates corporate boardrooms and federal agencies. The suspicion toward American exceptionalism he described has metastasized into open hostility toward the nation's founding principles. The moral relativism he warned against has become orthodoxy.

And yet, for all this, the book does not read as dated. It reads as prophetic.

Critics will attempt the predictable maneuver: They will insist that the Cold War context renders Stormer's concerns obsolete. Communism, they will say, collapsed with the Soviet Union. The threat is gone.

Such assertions betray either ignorance or deliberate obfuscation.

Communism as a geopolitical superpower may have suffered institutional collapse, but collectivist ideology did not evaporate. It adapted. It embedded itself in academia, in international organizations, in "nongovernmental" networks, and in the rhetoric of social justice divorced from constitutional constraints. The instruments changed; the objectives — centralization of power, subordination of individual liberty to the state, erosion of national sovereignty — did not.

The importance of this new edition lies partly in its accessibility to a generation that has been systematically shielded from dissenting interpretations of modern American history. Young Americans are routinely taught that skepticism toward centralized authority is extremism, that constitutional originalism is antiquated, and that global governance is enlightened inevitability. They are rarely exposed to serious critiques grounded in documentary evidence.

Stormer provides precisely that.

Moreover, this edition from Western Islands restores to circulation a work that was instrumental in shaping the grassroots awakening of the 1960s. It sold in the millions — not because it was marketed by establishment publishers, but because ordinary Americans passed it hand to hand. It energized citizens who refused to accept the comforting platitudes of bipartisan accommodation. It challenged them to examine primary sources, to question narratives, and to measure policy against constitutional principle.

That spirit is desperately needed today.

To read *None Dare Call It Treason* is to confront an uncomfortable reality: Subversion does not always announce itself with banners and slogans. It often proceeds under the cover of pragmatism, bipartisanship, and incremental reform. Liberty is rarely surrendered in a single dramatic act. It is bartered away through compromise after compromise until the constitutional framework is hollowed out.

Stormer's warning was not merely about communists in high places. It was about complacency among the governed.

The book demands intellectual courage. It invites readers to test its claims against the historical record. It does not ask for blind acceptance; it insists on verification. That alone distinguishes it from much of contemporary political commentary, which trades in emotion untethered from evidence.

Does the book reflect the Cold War vocabulary of its time? Certainly. Does it occasionally adopt a tone that modern readers will find stark? Without question. But such features should not obscure its core achievement: a meticulously documented case that the trajectory of American governance was diverging from constitutional limits long before most citizens recognized the danger.

The Republic cannot be preserved by ignorance of its past.

The Republic cannot be defended by those unaware of the mechanisms by which it is eroded.

And the Republic cannot be restored without the moral fortitude to call treason what is, in fact: betrayal of constitutional duty.

This new Western Islands edition arrives at a moment when Americans are again grappling with questions of sovereignty, executive power, congressional abdication, and the proper scope of government. It offers not easy answers, but a bracing reminder that vigilance is the price of liberty — and that the gravest threats often arise not from declared enemies abroad, but from ideological commitments embraced at home.

Half a century ago, John A. Stormer dared to call it treason. Today, the greater danger may be that too many dare not.

For readers of *The New American* — and for all who cherish the Constitution as the supreme law of the land — this reissue is not merely recommended. It is required reading.

To order the book, go to WesternIslandsPublishing.com. ■

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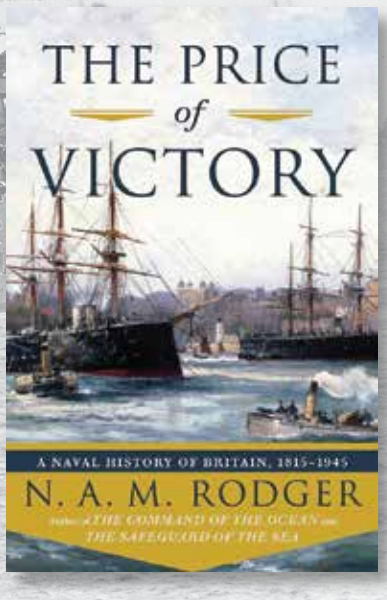



# DEEP DIVE INTO THE ROYAL NAVY

**by William P. Hoar**

***The Price of Victory: A Naval History of Britain, 1815-1945,*** by N.A.M. Rodger, New York: Norton, 2025, 974 pages, hardcover.

This authoritative work is the final volume of a trilogy of British naval history, with the three books totaling about 2,500 published pages. It succeeds *The Safeguard of the Sea* (published in 1997), which covered from the years 660 to 1649, and *The Command of the Ocean* (published in 2004), which picked up the historic thread from when Cromwell landed at Dublin with an English army (1649) to 1815 — including the Napoleonic Wars and the Battle of Trafalgar. As author N.A.M. Rodger said in the second volume, after that campaign, "Britain had an unchallenged command of the sea in quantity and quality, materially and psychologically, over all her actual or potential enemies." That account concluded contemporaneously with the Battle of Waterloo.

The book under review navigates from the time of Napoleon's surrender to the British Royal Navy through the Second World War, including an epilogue that briefly summarizes more current events such as attacks on warships and merchant vessels in the Red Sea and Beijing's bullying in the China Seas. (The chronology is quite helpful.)

Why did it take so long to finish the latest work? Rodger says he has no excuse — other than serious illness and "an exciting episode of brain surgery" that required years of recovery. One wonders if, after all that maritime toil, the author enjoys resting at the beach. Or perhaps he is partial to cruises.

Be advised that these pages deliver much more than chronicles about military campaigns and hostilities, though those are certainly part of the story. Politics and geostrategy are also key points. The writer emphasizes that he has devoted almost half of the volume to "the background rather than the foreground of naval history." The tone is both scholarly and bracing. Even if you don't buy all the author's conclusions, you will probably find his arguments plausible and persuasive.

Take your time. This is a book that could be read a second time with purpose or used as a resource for reference. The first of 35 concentrated chapters is one of the 13 that deal with "policy and operations"; other broad categories are government and administration, social history, and ships and weapons (including, over time, aircraft).

While the scope is expansive, with ample attention paid to allies and enemies (and some that are both), there is no doubt that the view provided from the metaphorical crow's nest is from a British perspective. (The first edition of this volume was initially published in Great Britain in 2024.) Author N.A.M. Rodger is an emeritus fellow at All Souls College, Oxford, and professor of naval history at the University of Exeter. He has been awarded the Julian Corbett Prize in Modern Naval History, the Duke of Westminster's Medal for Military Literature, and the Hattendorf Prize.

As with the previous books in the trilogy, this volume supplies much more than dozens of chapters of historical narrative. Adding to the book's value are 64 images and 10 maps, along with nearly 300 pages of extras, including appendices, references, two glossaries (English and foreign), beneficial abbreviations, a worthwhile bibliography, and a largely supportive index (not counting the entry on page 933 that has the wrong date of the Washington Treaty, a rare stubbed toe by the publisher).

How do you depict suitably a cover of *The Price of Victory*, which broadly includes periods of classic Nelsonian types, hybrid steam/sail ships, armored Dreadnoughts, and more modern warships? What was selected (seen above) is from the artist William Lionel Wyllie and his 1896 work "The Chan-

nel Fleet off Scarborough," showing the warship formation on the North Sea coast that defended the English Channel at that time (and later in World War I).

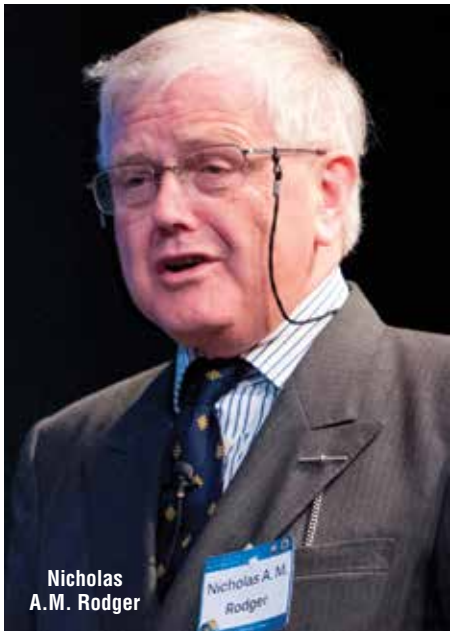
### Officers and Men

With this broad stage and a time span this long, there are delicacies wherever you look. Here are some: When looking at social life, one learns how overstuffed the captain's lists were in 1810 — to the point that only 41 percent of captains on the *Navy List* were actually serving, as was the case with 44 percent of the commanders and 60 percent of lieutenants. A couple of years later, the British Navy had more than 4,800 commissioned officers, said to be "about twice as many as it needed for 147,000 men and 485 ships and vessels." (The others received half pay.) Granting promotions added to the problem.

There were not enough jobs for them. The existing older officers forgot their skills, but they blocked the prospects of the junior officers. Rodger has some figures: "In 1832 only 24 per cent of the lieutenants, 13 per cent of the commanders and less than 10 per cent of the captains were employed." The numbers changed in subsequent decades, but the issue remained. "By the 1840s commanders spent half their time in that rank ashore and lieutenants three-quarters of their time."

On the other hand, as the author writes several pages later, naval officers "were not insensitive to the attractions of freight.... A commander-in-chief on the South American or Pacific stations might make £10,000 in three years." Such sums (and many that were much higher) were within regulations, though, as the writer observes, they were "also powerful temptations to dishonesty."

Commanders and captains "earning £300 to £500 a year might collect ten years' pay with a lucky voyage." Here are some (very rough) relevant calculations (sadly, these are not included in the book). What was £10,000 worth? In 1820, £10,000 was equivalent to $44,000-$50,000. Adjusted for inflation, that amount (again in *very rough* numbers) would have a purchasing power of at least $1 million today. (The second volume of the trilogy did include rates of pay of various ranks; this book does not.)



Nicholas A.M. Rodger

One of the chapters on the social life of the men (as opposed to officers) covers a full century (1815-1914). It might surprise some readers to find "flogging" still being discussed in what might seem relatively current days. (Think, perhaps, of a time when your grandfather's father was a lad.) There were (but of course) regulations about such naval discipline. Writes Rodger:

> Up to the mid-19th century, few officers thought flogging could be completely abandoned, but it was a mark of the good officer to rely on it as little as possible. In 1827 the Duke of Clarence forbade the flogging of petty officers and required captains to put in their quarterly returns their reasons for disrating a petty officer. In 1830 a captain's power to flog was limited to forty-eight lashes, and in 1846 flogging in home ports required the written approval of the senior officer present.

Today, this being a more progressive time, we most assuredly do not believe the young are like canoes — which behave better if paddled from the rear.

### "Russian War," Telegraph Cable Monopoly

The British Navy in 1834 was clearly big on boys — it allowed a thousand boys (in the Navy Estimates) in place of 500 men, then doubled the number the following year. There was another plus. In Rodger's telling: "Most boys of this generation were literate when the older seamen were not." One who served when he was age 13 recalled writing letters for his older shipmates who could not do so, and buying books when reaching shore, with a reminiscence about how they read "Captain Marryat's novels." (Good choice; as a youth, my favorite Frederick Marryat book was *Mr. Midshipman Easy.* I eventually graduated, in terms of naval reading, to Patrick O'Brian's stupendous 21-volume Aubrey/Maturin series, set in the Napoleonic era.)

Jump ahead in time and see how, until January 1919, the Royal Naval College, Osborne, was still taking in young boys after World War I ended. "The parents of all these boys had to undertake, on their entry at twelve years old, that they would make the Navy 'their possession for life' until the age of forty-eight at least." This was effectively indentured labor for more than three decades.

Their jobs would likely be easier on their backs than those of a stoker for a battleship. "Every stoker was expected to shovel 2.4 tons of coal in a four-hour watch," notes the author.

There is, you might be surprised to hear, no coverage in this volume of the "Crimean War" (1853-1856), which often is blamed on Russia trying to gain territory from the weakening Ottoman Empire. Rather, in this book, the author insists this was the "Russian War." As he explains: The Russian War "involved major and minor campaigns spread over thousands of miles of land and sea, which makes the later 'Crimean War' particularly misleading." Extra credit is available if you can list who was in that conflict and who was not. Here's Rodger: "Austria, Prussia, and Sweden declined to join the war, and the only allies of Britain and Russia were the Ottoman Empire, and later Piedmont-Sardinia." Kewpie dolls to those who recalled that latter Italian entity.

There are much more than ships involved in naval power. The importance of communications and the cable industry is put into plain words in several places. For example, readers are told of Sir John Pender (1816-1896), a Scottish

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submarine communications cable pioneer and politician. He controlled two companies, called Eastern and Western Telegraph, "which between them owned 45 per cent of all privately owned cables in the world, including those running east to Australia and China, or west to the Americas." With the "discreet support of the British government," notes the author, "he found the means to prevent any competitor from filling the obvious gap across the Pacific until 1902."

While some might consider such matters as being peripheral, it is having the time and space for such points that makes this sweeping naval history so valuable. The monopoly helped the government, and vice versa. "Foreign governments and businessmen," continues the narrative in a chapter on government and administration (1860-1890),

> suspected the danger of passing all their foreign communications through London, but they had no alternatives. They did not know that every day a messenger from Eastern Telegraph's office delivered a sack of telegrams to the Admiralty to be read and returned in twenty-four hours. Much of this control of world secret communications lasted until and beyond the Second World War.

Rodger does not seem particularly upset about this. To quote French economist Frédéric Bastiat, who promoted free trade: "Slavery, protection, and monopoly find defenders, not only in those who profit by them, but in those who suffer by them."

### Citing Churchill

Some readers from this side of the Atlantic will recognize names of prominent players, but may be taken aback a bit about their earlier stances. Winston Churchill is one such. A "social history" chapter discusses a 1911 campaign against "harsh and arbitrary punishments," and how that movement "attracted the new left-wing Liberal First Lord, Winston Churchill, fresh from reforming the prisons as Home Secretary."

The "lower-deck societies," pointing to price increases and widespread strikes ashore, were then pushing for higher naval pay. This increase was handed down in 1912, even as much "of the Service press raged that the Admiralty, under a left-wing Liberal First Lord, was infected with what was called 'Socialist subversion.'" The raise that took place in 1912, we learn, was the first real naval pay increase since 1853.

Rodger isn't picking on Churchill — just being more complete in reportage than many. There's a lot that the author could bring up, such as when Randolph Churchill, the son of the future prime minister during World War II, asked his father how he could avoid defeat. Here's the future PM's vow: "I shall drag the United States in." (See *Desperate Deception: British Covert Operations in the United States, 1939-44* by Thomas Mahl — who is a fan of the overall deception. This book, published in 1998, would be a good addition to the bibliography of *The Price of Victory*.)

The author does examine a stance by Churchill when he was chancellor of the exchequer. While believing a British naval base should be built in Singapore, he saw that as only a defensive move that would safeguard Australia and New Zealand, declaring in 1928: "A war with Japan! But why should there be a war with Japan? I do not believe there is the slightest chance of it in our lifetime.... Japan is at the other side of the world. She cannot menace our vital security in any way." Concluding, Churchill said he was convinced "that war with Japan is not a possibility any reasonable Government need take into account."

Most current readers will probably not be conversant with the "Agadir Crisis" of 1911 (named after the Moroccan Atlantic port of the same name). The author surveys it, pointing out that "both France and Germany interfered with Moroccan affairs and the British felt obliged to back the French." This was one of many precursors to WWI, and played a role in Churchill becoming first lord of the admiralty, where he was to conclude that the Royal Navy should convert from coal to oil for fuel. Writes Rodger: "Like all Radicals, indeed virtually all liberals, Churchill did not regard battleships as desirable in themselves and wanted to build as few as was consistent with British security."

Elsewhere, we read, following that war, the "public discourse" of the 1930s was "preoccupied with peace and disarmament." Arms manufacturers were commonly believed to encourage wars. "In November 1939," Rodger recalls, "some 62 per cent of British men declared to a public opinion survey that they would not volunteer to fight." Even after the Munich crisis, 74 percent of the British population "approved of ap-

peasement, 60 per cent were happy with Neville Chamberlain as Prime Minister, and only 4 per cent preferred Churchill."

### "Semi-secret" Groups, U-boats

While individual chapters in the book are careful about specifying the times and events, there are overlaps when the topics change. You might be reading about events in, say, 1860, then quickly find (in the next chapter) that you are bumping into ships in 1815. Pay close attention.

Consider the chapter on policy and operations that starts with 1890. As the author puts it, "as late as 1914 neither the Cabinet nor the Admiralty had adequate means to form policy and strategy." So, who was in charge?

One suspects that the professor knows a bit more about that than what he writes. He does say: "What planning for war was being undertaken was often the work of informal and semi-secret groups" with "statesmen" having rival ambitions. We can offer him a clue: Check the work of former Georgetown Professor Carroll Quigley, who taught at Princeton and Harvard, including the massive *Tragedy & Hope: A History of the World in Our Time* (1966) and *The Anglo-American Establishment: From Rhodes to Cliveden* (1981).There one can find particulars on how the "Rhodes secret society" and the "Milner Group" (essentially the same group) ran matters.

Rodger does admit that British historians "assume implicitly that Britain was, or ought to have been, in control of events." Quigley, for his part, questions how a small number of men "should be able to monopolize so completely the writing and the teaching of history of their own period."

German U-boats play a big part in the operations section during World War I, and the submarine and anti-sub warfare developments are highlights of this book. However, as Rodger notes, by the autumn of 1917, "it was clear that convoys worked, and the U-boat campaign was failing, but it was not at all clear who was going to win the wider war." Decades later, during World War II, the Germans thought their underwater transmissions couldn't be detected. Wrong. Credit is given to a civilian expert who had been evacuated from Poland who was taken in by the Admiralty Signal Establishment, and his work on high-frequency direction finding (HF/DF, or "huff duff").

As you might expect, the wars themselves in *The Price of Victory* are well covered, albeit with a British bias. For example, when covering the attack on Pearl Harbor on December 1941 and how Singapore surrendered in mid-February of the next year, Rodger calls the Japanese actions a total victory, "greater than any in naval history."

In five months, he writes, "the Japanese gained 250,000 prisoners and sank 105 ships for the loss of 21,000 casualties, 562 aircraft and 27 small ships. By early March virtually the whole arc of the East Indies from Malaya to New Guinea was in Japanese hands. The US battle-fleet was already sunk."

The U.S. Army had "surrendered 35,000 men, its only field army, to the Japanese on the Bataan Peninsula near Manila on 9 April and lost the island fortress of Corregidor a month later."

Along with a long list of examples, Rodger puts April and May of 1941, six days before Japan entered WWII, as the "lowest point in Britain's military fortunes."

### Harry Hopkins and Stalin, Current Situation Report

In a chapter about "government and operations" in 1942, we find others operating in the shadows even as U.S. President Franklin Roosevelt's health was failing. One such was Harry Hopkins. The author terms him a "key personality" who "held no formal office and was frequently off sick." Hopkins made up, we are told, "for the chronic weakness of the US diplomatic corps by acting as Roosevelt's personal representative, trusted by both Churchill and [Joseph] Stalin, and took a large share of the management of the Lend-Lease programme" — which allowed Washington to supply Allied nations with war materiel on credit or as loans during WWII.

True, but that is an understatement. Roosevelt was known to boast that "Harry [Hopkins] and Uncle Joe [Stalin] got on like a house afire. They have become buddies," as quoted by John T. Flynn in *The Roosevelt Myth* (revised edition, 1956). As Flynn wrote, "Hopkins said it was ridiculous to think of Stalin as a Communist. He was a Russian nationalist."

Eight chapters later, near the end of his book, Rodger does not disguise his anger and frustration that the postwar U.S. Congress was so insistent that Britain repay what was owed. By contrast (and with more than a touch of overstatement), Flynn concluded his book with a list of the nations that Roosevelt (and, later, President Harry Truman) had surrendered (following a series of conferences) "to the brutal tyranny of his 'great friend' Stalin," with about 725 million people being added to the 193 million already held by Moscow.

After Truman became president, following Roosevelt's death, Rodger writes, he "appears to have received no previous security briefing" and had never heard of the atom bomb. Perhaps more relevant, as explained in *The Venona Secrets: Exposing Soviet Espionage and America's Traitors* (2000) by Herbert Romerstein and Eric Breindel, "Soviet intelligence was regularly reporting to the Kremlin on the top-secret British atom bomb as early as 1941." And the Americans and the British were pushing for the Soviets to enter the war against Tokyo.

There's much to like in this volume of almost 1,000 pages, although it also helps to have shelves full of correlated books for augmenting and amending.

During the era discussed at the end of the second book in the trilogy and the beginning of the third book, Britannia did rule the waves. By the time covered at the end of *The Price of Victory*, the international press is questioning London's military readiness, with headlines such as "Why Britain Can't Afford a Navy." Another contemporary account points with concern to the Royal Navy's two aircraft carriers, along with a "tiny" number of F-35B vertical takeoff and landing stealth fighters — just 37 of them. Another recent piece estimates that the British Navy has been reduced to perhaps 63 ships, even as it employs more than 100 admirals at the rank of one star and above.

Rodger acknowledges that there are surely uncertainties about whether Britain is still a naval power, suggesting that the real question "will be whether to fight for ourselves and our friends, or to yield." ■

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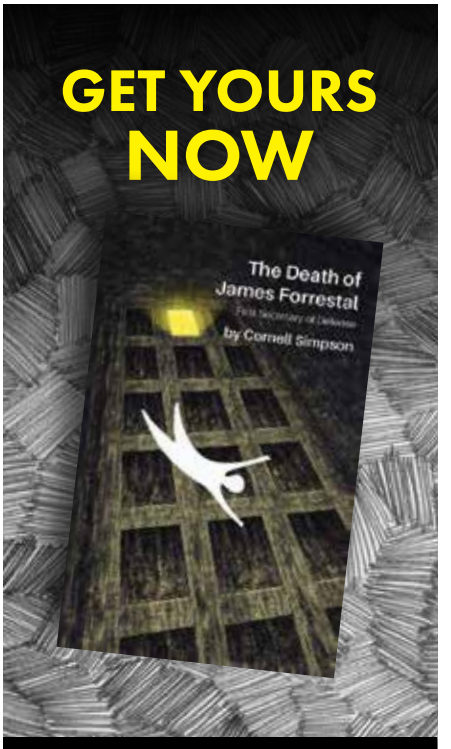


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THE LAST WORD

# Which Way, USA?

*by John T. Larabell*

Pete Hegseth, Donald Trump, and Marco Rubio
AP Photo/Mark Schiefelbein

Alongside our articles in this issue about Just War principles, war powers, and the economics of the Iran War, we ought to review another aspect of U.S. foreign policy: the National Security Strategy (NSS).

In the 2025 NSS, released December 4, the Trump administration was unambiguous: "To ensure that America remains the world's strongest, richest, most powerful, and most successful country for decades to come, our country needs a coherent, focused strategy for how we interact with the world."

While most Americans would appreciate the above statement and find it fairly innocuous, further on, the document makes a bold assertion: "After the end of the Cold War, American foreign policy elites convinced themselves that permanent American domination of the entire world was in the best interests of our country." That's a welcome admission that should please many America First patriots, as the NSS goes on to reject the idea of global dominance for America.

However, in Section III, the document lists "the world's leading financial system and capital markets, including the dollar's global reserve currency status," as part of "America's Available Means to Get What We Want." Section IV, "The Strategy," states, "The United States cannot allow any nation to become so dominant that it could threaten our interests. We will work with allies and partners to maintain global and regional balances of power to prevent the emergence of dominant adversaries." (China, of course, is one of the main "dominant adversaries" that needs to be held in check, particularly over the status of Taiwan.)

So, apparently, America does not seek to be a global hegemon, but wants to maintain the dollar's global reserve currency status and wants to prevent any other nation from becoming powerful enough to challenge her, using alliances and partnerships if necessary. Through the 2025 NSS, the Trump administration seems as though it's trying to balance two contradictory ideas, and not doing either very well.

So we may ask the question, "Which way, USA?" Should America openly seek global dominance, as she has in the past; should she claim to retrench and deny any desire for hegemony, while still maintaining and supporting the system that maintains that very hegemony; or should she genuinely seek a noninterventionist, America First foreign policy?

As is often the case, turning to the advice and writings of the Founders is wise.

Then-Secretary of State John Quincy Adams spoke on this subject in his famous July 4, 1821 speech, and is worth quoting here at length: "America, with the same voice which spoke herself into existence as a nation, proclaimed to mankind the inextinguishable rights of human nature, and the only lawful foundations of government…. Wherever the standard of freedom and Independence, has been or shall be unfurled, there will her heart, her benedictions and her prayers be. But she goes not abroad, in search of monsters to destroy. She is the well-wisher to the freedom and independence of all. She is the champion and vindicator only of her own. She will recommend the general cause by the countenance of her voice, and the benignant sympathy of her example. She well knows that by once enlisting under other banners than her own, were they even the banners of foreign Independence, she would involve herself beyond the power of extrication, in all the wars of interest and intrigue, of individual avarice, envy, and ambition, which assume the colors and usurp the standard of freedom. The fundamental maxims of her policy would insensibly change from *liberty* to *force*. The frontlet upon her brow would no longer beam with the ineffable splendor of Freedom and Independence; but in its stead would soon be substituted an Imperial Diadem, flashing in false and tarnished lustre the murky radiance of dominion and power. She might become the dictatress of the world. She would be no longer the ruler of her own spirit."

Becoming and striving to remain a global economic, political, and military hegemon was the furthest thing from the mind of the Founders. No one nation can maintain global dominance forever, and attempting this will only compound our current problems. Being one of many powers in the world — even though unique and exceptional — was the status of America upon her founding, and returning to that status would likely do her a world of good. ■

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by John A. Stormer

This book documents the decay in America's schools, churches, and press that has conditioned the American people to accept 20 years of retreat in the face of the communist enemy. You won't finish None Dare Call It Treason without concluding that America is in serious trouble. (2025ed, 340pp, pb, 1-13/$4.00ea, 14+/$3.60ea) **BKNDCTPB**

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By Rose L. Martin

What if America's drift toward collectivism was planned? Fabian Freeway: High Road to Socialism in the U.S.A. exposes how Britain's Fabian Society exported its slow-motion revolution to America. Rose L. Martin traces its hidden networks, naming the groups and operatives who disguised socialist designs as "liberal reform." Backed by official records, rosters, and congressional data, this reprinted book includes an updated foreword by Joe Wolverton II, J.D. (2025ed, 582pp, pb, $10.00ea) **BKFF**

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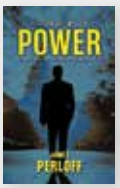


*In The Shadows of Power*, originally published in 1989, James Perloff rips the mask off the Council on Foreign Relations (CFR) and exposes how CFR insiders have built the foundation for world government. If you want to understand the true power behind the throne — and how to fight it — this is essential reading. This edition includes a new Foreword by Joe Wolverton II, J.D. (2025ed, 273pp, 1+/$6.99ea) **BKSOPN**

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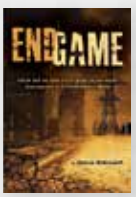


By Dennis Behreandt

*End Game* by Dennis Behreandt is an examination of the terrifying ideas of the Dark State's internationalist-elite oligarchs and the disquieting technological trends that, combined, threaten the fabric of our reality and the very future of mankind. Examining the history of population control, eugenics, and genocide and the ideas that motivated these crimes against humanity, *End Game* provides the deep and dark context that lies behind the policies implemented worldwide as part of the Covid pandemic response. (2022ed, 346pp, pb, 1-9/$4.99ea; 10+/$3.04ea) **BKEG**

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by Arthur R. Thompson

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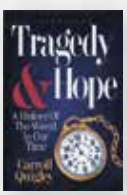


By Carroll Quigley

Professor Carroll Quigley praises the efforts of an "international Anglophile network" whose goal is to rule the world. He boasts of having been permitted "to examine its papers and secret records," confirms the existence of an overarching conspiracy, and details the origin and rise to power of the CFR and allied groups. (1997ed, 1348pp, hb, $27.99ea) **BKTAH**

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